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CENTENARY EDITION

THE
LETTERS OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT
1808—1811

THE first volume of the Centenary Edition of Sir Walter Scott's letters was published on September 21, 1932 under the title

THE LETTERS OF SIR
WALTER SCOTT

1787-1807

and at the price of 18s. net

The following is a selection from the extensive press reviews :

The Times :

"The most important event of this centenary year."

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"The best tribute to the memory of Scott."

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"A worthy homage to Scott."

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"An event of major importance to students of Scott's works."

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"Unlike most memorials, it savours not of burial but of resuscitation."

It is expected that the Centenary Edition will be completed in ten volumes, and the dating of the first four will be as follows :

VOLUME I. *The Letters of 1787-1807*

VOLUME II. *The Letters of 1808-1811*

VOLUME III. *The Letters of 1811-1814*

VOLUME IV. *The Letters of 1815-1817*

THE
LETTERS OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT
1808—1811

EDITED BY

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REGIUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

ASSISTED BY

DAVIDSON COOK

W. M. PARKER

and others

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LENDERS OF LETTERS PRINTED IN THIS
VOLUME FROM ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

*The words in Italics are the shortened title of lender,
as printed below each letter*

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Young, Owen D.

Owen D. Young, Esq., New York

PRINTED SOURCES OF LETTERS INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME

Annual Biography

The Annual Biography and Obituary, 1837. Vol. xxi.
London, 1837

Craig-Brown's Selkirkshire

History of Selkirkshire. By T. Craig-Brown. Vol. I.
Edinburgh, 1886.

Edgecumbe's Lady Shelley's Diary

The Diary of Frances Lady Shelley. Edited by her
grandson, Richard Edgecumbe. 2 vols. London,
1912-13

Exhibition, 1871, Catalogue

The Scott Exhibition Catalogue [1871]. Edinburgh, 1872

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Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott. Edited by David
Douglas. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1894

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Memoir and Correspondence of General James Stuart

Fraser. By Hastings Fraser. London, 1885

Gleanings from an Old Portfolio

Gleanings from an old Portfolio. Edited by Mrs. Godfrey Clark. Vol. iii. Edinburgh, 1898

Hadden's George Thomson

George Thomson, the Friend of Burns. His Life and Correspondence. By J. Cuthbert Hadden. London, 1898

Letters to Governess, 1905

Letters written by members of Sir Walter Scott's Family to their old Governess. Edited by the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. London, 1905

Lockhart

Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. [By J. G. Lockhart.] 7 vols. Edinburgh, 1837-38; and second edition. 10 vols. Edinburgh, 1839

Montgomery, Life of James

Memoirs of James Montgomery, including Selections from his Correspondence. Edited by John Holland and James Everett. 7 vols. London, 1854-56

*Notes and Queries**O'Donoghue's Tour in Ireland*

Sir Walter Scott's Tour in Ireland in 1825 now first fully described. By J. J. O'Donoghue. Glasgow and Dublin, 1905

Our Forefathers

Our Forefathers. By Mary Anne Scott Moncrieff. Edinburgh (privately printed), 1895

Rogers and his Contemporaries

A Century of Scottish Life; Memorials and Recollections of Historical and Remarkable Persons. By Charles Rogers. Edinburgh, 1871.

Scott, Letters of Sir Walter, 1832

Letters of Sir Walter Scott, addressed to the Rev. R. Polwhele and others. London, 1832

Scott-Baillie Letters

Letters between Sir Walter Scott and Joanna Baillie printed in the *Edinburgh Review*

Sharpe's Letters

Letters From and To Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq. Edited by Alexander Allardyce. With a Memoir by the Rev. W. K. Bedford. 2 vols. Edinburgh and London, 1888

Smiles

A Publisher and his Friends. Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray. By Samuel Smiles, LL.D. 2 vols. London, 1891

Surtees Memoir

Memoir of Robert Surtees. By G. Taylor, with additions by J. Raine. (Publications of the Surtees Society.) Newcastle, 1852

Sutherland Book

The Sutherland Book. By Sir William Fraser. Vol. ii. Edinburgh, 1892

1808

TO LADY MINTO¹

DEAR LADY MINTO,—Mr. Constable will send your Ladyship tomorrow two copies of *Marmion* properly packed up—One splendid which I hope the Governor General will do me the honor to accept & one of a subordinate description for my brother-in-law Carpenter. I also inclose a few lines to Lord Minto with my little offering of grateful remembrance.

As your Ladyship flattered me by expressing a wish for an early perusal I send my own copy the only one yet finished. I have promised to shew some part of it [to] a friend tomorrow evening but if your Ladyship wishes to have it returned to finish the perusal on the *fast day* when it will be like “stolen waters” or “bread eaten in secret” I will have the honor to return it on Thursday morning if you will be so good as spare it me tomorrow about 6 o’clock. Believe me with great respect Your Ladyship’s most Obedient Very humble Servt

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. *Tuesday* [1808]

[*Owen D. Young*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

[*Jan.*] A.D. 1808

DEAR SHARPE,—Lady Louisa Stuart is with us tonight if you will look in any time after seven. I am anxious to

¹ Sir Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto, succeeded Lord William Bentinck as Governor-General in 1807. He had married, in 1777, Anna Maria, eldest daughter of Sir George Amyard. Their kindness to Leyden is referred to more than once. In 1813 he was succeeded by another friend of Scott, Lord Moira.

congratulate you upon your safe delivery.¹ The first literary child always gives most trouble & anxiety
Believe me Yours always W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Thursday*.

Charles K. Sharpe Esq. 5 Charlotte Square
[*Hornel*]

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, JUNR.

[1808]

DEAR SIR,—I have your note for £200,, and I think it will be very right to bring all these sums together when I have been able to complete my advance. I rather think it will be impossible for me to do so to the proposed extent till next Summer. What I should wish would be to see the Concern which is in so flourishing a state proceed from blossom to fruit or without a metaphor I would like to advance as much as may secure us (in general at least) from the necessity of temporary expedients and admit of my drawing my proportion of the profits which at present must necessarily go to discharge these burthens. The payment of the Copy Money of Marmion will put this in my power even to a larger extent than you desired. But till this is received I see little chance of my being able to contribute above an odd hundred or two which I expect from India.—I am therefore anxious about the progress of this work and wish it to be set up with speed. Constable informs me that the paper is daily expected and that you may set up a sheet or two in the mean time. I therefore send the Introduction to Canto I and will send the Canto itself on Monday. I am with regard Yours truly

CASTLE STREET *Saturday*

W SCOTT

Private. Mr. John Ballantyne Junior.

[*Signet Library*]

¹ Sharpe's *Metrical Legends and other Poems*, 1807. The letters A.D. before 1808 suggest that the date is 1st January. Sharpe's dedication to Miss Campbell of Monzie is dated Hoddam Castle, 4th November 1807, so that, presumably, it appeared in December.

To J. W. ADAM

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge your polite letter and to return you my best thanks for the flattering opinion which you have been pleased to express of my literary efforts.

My time has been lately employed upon the poem to which you allude ; but as it does not give any historical account of the unfortunate Battle of Flodden, being in truth merely a poetical romance terminated by that memorable event, I have not felt myself called upon to make any minute researches into the circumstances of the defeat : nor do I at present remember any thing corresponding to the circumstance which you enquire about. If I should happen to light upon any thing likely to be useful to you in establishing your right to the arms and chieftainship of your family I will have great pleasure in communicating it and I am with great respect Sir your obliged and obedt. Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 12 *Jany.* 1808.

[*Owen D. Young*]

To LADY LOUISA STUART

EDINBURGH, 19th *January* 1808

I AM much flattered, Dear Lady Louisa, by your kind and encouraging remembrance. Marmion is, at this instant, gasping upon Flodden field, and there I have been obliged to leave him for these few days in the death pangs. I hope I shall find time enough this morning to knock him on the head with two or three thumping stanzas. I thought I should have seen Lady Douglas while she was at Dalkeith, but all the Clerks of Session (excepting myself, who have at present no salary) are subject to the gout, and one of them was unluckily visited with a fit on the day I should have been at the Duke's, so I had his duty and my own to discharge.—Pray, Lady

Louisa, don't look for Marmion in Hawthornden or anywhere else, excepting in the too thick quarto which bears his name. As to the fair De Lally,¹ I beg her pardon with all my heart and spirit ; but I rather think that the habit of writing novels or romances, whether in prose or verse, is unfavourable to rapid credulity ; at least these sort of folks know that they can easily make fine stories themselves, and will be therefore as curious in examining those of other folks as a cunning vintner in detecting the sophistication of his neighbour's claret by the help of his own experience. Talking of fair ladies and fables reminds me of Mr. Sharpe's ballads, which I suppose Lady Douglas carried with her to Bothwell. They exhibit, I think, a very considerable portion of imagination, and occasionally, though not uniformly, great flow of versification. There is one verse, or rather the whole description of a musical ghost-lady sitting among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me very much. But his language is too flowery and even tawdry, and I quarrelled with a lady in the first poem who yielded up her affection upon her lover showing his white teeth.² White teeth ought to be taken great care of and set great store by ; but I cannot allow them to be an object of passionate admiration—it is too like subduing a lady's heart by grinning. Grieved am I for Lady Douglas's indisposition, which I hope will be short, and I am sure will be tolerable with such stores of amusement around her. Last night I saw all the Dalkeith family presiding in that happy scene of mixed company and Babylonian confusion, the Queen's Assembly. I also

¹ Governess at Bothwell, a daughter of the well-known Lally Tollendal. (Statement by Lady Louisa in a letter to Miss Clinton).—*Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*, III, p. 199.

²

Those eyes of blue that softly roll,
 Soon mov'd the witching maiden's soul
 With joy till then unknown :
 He spoke—short grew her panting breath—
 He smil'd—Ah, hide those pearly teeth :
 The damsel's heart is gone.

That is about the level of Sharpe's poetry.

saw Mr. Alison there. I hope your ladyship has not renounced your intention of coming to Edinburgh for a day or two, and that I shall have the honour to see you. We have here a very diverting lion and sundry wild beasts ; but the most meritorious is Miss Lydia White,¹ who is what Oxonians call a lioness of the first order, with stockings nineteen-times-nine dyed blue, very lively, very good-humoured, and extremely absurd. It is very diverting to see the sober Scotch ladies staring at this phenomenon. I am, with great respect, your ladyship's honoured and obliged

WALTER SCOTT

[Lockhart]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[1808]

DEAR SIR,—The volumes of Swift (besides the first) which are wanting in the copy sent me are the 7th. 8th. and 18th. I should be glad to have them as soon as possible & also the Examiner which is become most essential. I cannot find it in the Advocates Liby. Yours truly

W. S.

Mr. Constable

[Stevenson]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 22d January 1808

DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—I have at length got a copy of Burns's *Love-Letters to Clarinda*² the little publication which I mentioned to your Ladyship at Dumfries. It is rather too heavy for an ordinary frank. I have therefore addressed it under cover to Lord Castlereagh, who will

¹ An amateur of literature and art, a friend of Anna Seward, she became a very loyal friend to Scott and did much to find material for him when he was busy on the *Life and Works of Swift*. Many of her letters to Scott are in the National Library.

² *Letters addressed to Clarinda by Robert Burns*. Glasgow, 1802. Three Belfast editions, dated 1806, are noted in the bibliography of J. C. Ewing's *Robert Burns's Letters addressed to Clarinda*. Edinburgh, 1921. One of these is in the Abbotsford Library.

I presume take care of it for your Ladyship. I mentioned the circumstances which attended this publication but as they are rather curious, I venture to remind you that *Clarinda* was in the *work-day world* a Mrs. Meiklehose (in English Mrs. Great-stockings). Her husband was in the West Indies when she became acquainted with Burns in the dawn of his celebrity. The progress and extent of their acquaintance may perhaps be guessed from the letters, which form the most extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense and of love human and divine, that was ever exposed to the eye of the world not excepting the celebrated familiar epistles of Mr. Robert Ferguson to Lady Elgin.¹ As Mrs. Meiklehose advanced in years her vanity became rather too strong for her discretion and confiding in the charity of her confidants and in her own character as a sort of *Dévôte* she thought fit to show this correspondence to particular friends and at length to a faithless young divine who sat up all night to make copies, put himself into the Glasgow Mail coach with peep of day and sold all the amatory effusions of Sylvander and *Clarinda* to a Glasgow Bookseller for the moderate sum of ten guineas. To the great horror of poor *Clarinda* and the absolute confusion of all the Godly in Edinburgh forth came a sixpenny pamphlet containing all these precious productions. The Heroine of the piece being respectably connected the book was suppressed partly by threatening and partly by bribing the Bookseller; and now although they have put a Belfast title upon the work it is very hard to procure a copy as your Ladyship may easily believe since it is so long since I could find you a copy. I shall grieve if this miscarries because it might be difficult to replace it; but I hope it will be more

¹ Mr. Robert Ferguson is not the poet but an advocate of Scott's day,—the laird of Raith. He married Mary, only child and heiress of William Hamilton Nisbet of Dirleton. Her marriage to Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin, had been dissolved on account of Ferguson by Act of Parliament in 1808. Her affair with Ferguson began in Paris. Her very interesting letters from Athens and the East were published some few years ago. He died in 1840, and she in 1855.

fortunate than the sheets sent to you when in Ireland. But as Ld. C. will receive the parcel at the same time you have this note there can be no chance of a second mishap of the kind.

I am asking myself if you are at the Priory or in St. James' Square. In one or other place I think it not unlikely that you may see the Minstrel in the course of a few weeks as Lord Advocate seems disposed to insist that I shall take a corner of his post-chaise to London which removes a certain weighty objection to the journey. I have finished *Marmion* and your Ladyship will do me the honour I hope to accept a copy very soon. In the sixth and last Canto I have succeeded better than I had ventured to hope, for I had a battle to fight, and I dread hard blows almost as much in poetry as in common life.—I am ever, with great respect and attachment, your Ladyship's most obedient, very faithful

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

[27th January, 1808]

DEAR CHARLES,—The Bearer is a poor man who claims to represent through the female line the last Kerr of Fawdonside. I have explai^d to him that this gives him no pretensions whatever to the great stake¹; but if the evidence of his being the representative of Sir Walter Ker of Fawdonside depends in any degree upon the oral testimony of witnesses now alive & chiefly aged persons it is pity it should perish. If he could be served

¹ The great stake was the dukedom of Roxburgh. In 1804 had died John, the third duke, to whose collection of rare books Scott has referred and to whose name the Roxburgh Club owes its title. He had been succeeded by a collateral who died the following year *sine prole* at the age of seventy-seven. Thereafter the title remained seven years dormant until James Innes Ker was able to make good his claim to be "the heir-male of the body of Margaret Ker, granddaughter (though not heir of line) of the first earl under that earl's nomination in 1646 of the Roxburgh dignities."—*Complete Peerage*. His title was allowed in 1812. Scott's closing words echo those of the first earl's settlement: "Which failing to his own male heirs whatsoever."

heir without much expence it would perhaps give him some chance of provision as a relation by the person who may eventually be Duke of Roxburghe. I confess I pity this poor fellow as his grandmother only wanted a pair of ba's to have put him in a better situation than Genl. Kerr. Perhaps something of a judicial examination might take place without the expence of a formal service—Yet who knows but this estate may one day go to *heirs whatsoever*?

I will soon return the submission with my ultimatum. I declare I tremble to think of that case as I think the chance of doing gross injustice is almost inevitable.

Clarkson promised to get for me old Brydone's broadsword but has not kept his word—I am foolishly anxious about it—pray see what he is about & dont let it stick for a guinea or two—I dont want a bargain of it. Be my Cashier on the occasion & oblige yours truly

W. SCOTT

[*Curle*]

TO DAVIES GILBERT¹

EDINBURGH, 29th Jan. 1808

SIR,—In availing myself of your kind offices to transmit the inclosed to Mr. Polwhele, I should be very ungrateful did I omit to make my best acknowledgments to you for the favourable opinion which you have been pleased to express of my literary attempts. I have been labouring (at least working) upon another legend connected with the Battle of Flodden : I have only to wish that it may experience half the kindness with which its predecessor was received, and will be particularly happy should it be

¹ David Giddy, who in 1817 took the name of his wife, the only daughter and heiress of Thomas Gilbert of Eastbourne, whom he had married in 1808. He was a well-known man of public spirit and in 1827 was elected president of the Royal Society. He edited a collection of Christmas carols (1827) and two Cornish Mystery plays. He had forwarded and franked a letter from Polwhele on 20th January and requested any answer should be enclosed to himself at the House of Commons.—*Walpole Collection*. He signs “Davies Giddy.”

the case in your instance. I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

To [JAMES BALLANTYNE]

DEAR SIR,—I return the two sheets. There shd. be a full stop after L Envoy¹—God grant the thing may do. If you will send a boy this evening ; he will get abundant copy both for the Life of Dryden & the Appendix Vol XVII to follow the letters. I have rummaged up some trashy materials to swell out that vol to 400 pages or so.

I should like much to have a copy clean or foul of the two last sheets of Marmion this eveng. if possible. Yours truly

[*Undated, no address.*]

W. S.

[*Signet Library*]

To LADY ABERCORN

5th February 1808

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I cannot express my sense of your active & zealous exertions in my behalf, & I have no doubt that Lord Melville is perfectly sincere in the Interest which he expresses in my fortunes. A circumstance has just happened within the common order of things which I believe will enable his Lordship to carry his good wishes in some degree into effect. We Clerks of Session were Clerks of the Scottish Parliament and as such our predecessors always claimed a right that the Secretary or Clerk to any Commission of Parliament

¹ This letter must have been written in January or early February, for *Marmion* appeared on the 23rd February. Scott is returning some of the last proofs with the :

L'ENVOY,

TO THE READER.

Why then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song &c.

The other references are to the Dryden and the Sadler letters. Despite the "Sir" there is no doubt the letter is to James Ballantyne : "God grant the thing may do" implies a friend.

which might sit in Scotland should be named out of their number. It is probably not unknown to your Ladyship that Lord Eldon has brought in a bill for making great alterations in our forms of jurisprudence and that a Commission consisting of all our high Law Officers and several of those of England are to be named to carry this into effect. This Commission must have a Secretary well acquainted with our law and law forms and my brethren at the Clerks' table without solicitation or the slightest hint on my part have to my great surprize made an application to Lord Melville stating their claim to have this officer named out of their number and recommending unanimously that I should be the person so appointed. I immediately wrote a few lines to Lord M. for the place though temporary is highly respectable & if I discharge the duty properly may or rather must pave the way to my getting forward in some shape or other. For as all the old forms are to be altered it is obvious that he who has the first & most intimate acquaintance with the new establishments has a chance of being considered as a *useful* man which as the most respectable is generally the surest road to preferment. The Chief Baron & Lord Advocate are warmly cordial & I cannot but think that the thing is in a fair train as every circumstance point [*sic*] out the request as regular & as it is preferred by those who cannot but know how far I am or am not qualified to discharge the duties of the situation—the Chancellor will receive a Memorial on the subject & I have also a friend who applies to Duke of Montrose (Lord Justice Genl.). I wrote to Lord Frederick Campbell (Lord Clerk Register) by this post ; & I have some thoughts of writing to Sir William Scott¹ who called on me when in town although I had never seen him. If any channel occurs to your Ladyship in which the matter could be privately stated

¹ Sir William Scott, later Baron Stowell, maritime and international lawyer, Advocate-General for office of Lord High Admiral.

to the Chancellor it would probably greatly aid our public claim. You see my dear friend how little I fear wearying your kindness in my behalf—& I am sure it will give you pleasure to think that my prospects are opening fairly & that those who have best opportunity to see me as a man of business do not find that my poetical excursions disqualify me for the serious pursuits of Life—Lord Marmion will visit St. James' Square before he becomes quite public as I shall send one copy by the Mail Coach to Blackheath & another to your Ladyship so soon as they can be stitched & boarded. I will at the same time return Lord M's kind letter—believe me it's contents are sacred—Do you think we have not heard of Lord Hamilton's ¹renown? even in the mutilated state in which a newspaper gives us the public debates it was easy to distinguish the spirit & elegance of his speech & I need not tell you how sincerely I rejoiced in the general approbation which my noble young friends talents called forth. I am glad Lord Claud is gone to the Brasils; he will see a most interesting and curious experiment in politics the transplantation of a whole royal family to a foreign colony and we will have a chance of hearing some distinct account of the success of this most extraordinary migration—If we lived in any other age what should we have said written and thought of the emigration of the House of Braganza; but we are turned as callous to Wonders as McBeth to horrors.—This Commission affair (if it succeeds) will bring me to town very soon indeed. Meanwhile I am, with great regard and a deep sense of your kindness, your very grateful and obliged W. S.

P.S. Lord Advocate has just looked in & says he will write to the Chancellor—so I hope will Lord Melville—

¹ Viscount Hamilton (1786-1814), son of the marquess by his first wife, M.P. for Dungannon and later (1807) for Liskeard. He married, as we shall see later, Harriet, daughter of the Earl of Morton, who, on his death, married the fourth Earl of Aberdeen, later Prime Minister, whose first wife had been the marquess's daughter. Lord Claud was the second son of the marquess, *b.* 1787. He died a year after this letter was written.

therefore my kind friend in St. James Square will judge of the whole bearings of the affair—perhaps these letters had best reach him before anything else is said about the matter.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I have a most kind satisfactory answer from Lord Melville on the subject of the Clerkship to the parliamentary commission & he says he is to write to your Ladyship & his son upon the subject. As he makes it his own affair I fancy your Ladyship will think it best not to trouble any other friends on the subject especially as all the high Law officers are unanimous in my favour except our Presidt.¹ who has returned no answer to my application. I believe I may say with Falstaffe on a similar occasion “ Good faith this cold-blooded Man loves me not ”—yet I know he neither dare nor will be an active adversary for it is not in his nature either to be a good friend or a bold enemy—Every other person seemed happy to shew me kindness the Justice Clerk sent me his answer in two lines

Tho’ all mankind thy rivals be
Thou Marmion art the Clerk for me.

I send a copy of the said Marmion by the mail so soon as complete I think of enclosing in [*sic for it*] notwithstanding the size to Ld Castlereagh or Geo. Canning—Ballantyne my ingenious printer tells me he hopes to let me have a copy on Saturday. I hope the Marquis & you will like this poem to which your approbation has given so great and additional energy. I really thought I should have sat down & never written a line more if it had not been for both your kindness at Longtown—My motions towards town will of course depend on this new employ-

¹ Sir Ilay Campbell (1734-1823), who was president of the Court of Session till July 1808, when he retired. On the bench he assumed the judicial title of Lord Succouth. Robert Blair of Avontoun, son of the author of *The Grave*, succeeded him as president. ●

ment. If I discharge it well I will be worthy of further trust—if not I do not desire it & would not wish a friend to ask it for me. To prevent accidents I reenclose Lord Melville's Letter to your Ladyship—My kind Respects to your noble family & believe as respectfully as sincerely
Your most faith- & grateful
W. S.

EDINR. 8th feby [1808]

I also enclose Lord Melville's letter to me that you may see how that matter stands—you will observe how much I owe to your Ladyship's kind offices.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES CARPENTER

EDINBURGH, *Feby.* 8th, 1808

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Referring you to a fuller letter, which I have written along with a copy of a new book *Marmion* which I hope Mrs. Carpenter will accept as kindly as she did my last, I send this by a young cousin¹ just setting sail as a Cadet for Madras. He is a brother of that Russell whom I formerly recommended to you (but I think you never met), and is a very good boy ; if it fall in your way to shew him any kindness or attention I am sure you will do so ; his mother was my Aunt, and we have always been good friends.

I am truly happy that Mrs. Carpenter's health has not compelled that separation which your last letter threatened. I hope and trust she will be able to remain with you till circumstances enable you to leave India for good. Believe me, I often think of you and all your kindness to Charlotte. It will give you pleasure to learn that we are going on very well. My last step was to become one of the Clerks of Session ; in doing so I renounced my practice at the Bar, and what is worse,

¹ The young cousin is Alexander Pringle, fifth son of Colonel William Russell of Ashestiel and Jean Rutherford. He entered the Company's army, and died in 1816.

as I entered by the resignation of an old and worthy predecessor, he retains his salary during his life. This bargain was made when I saw the administration going to pieces after poor Pitt's death, and knew how little I had to expect from those who came into power after that calamitous event.

To be sure I could not expect the change of Ministry which took place immediately afterwards, nor though I arrived in London the very day it happened could I easily believe my eyes and ears. As I had (contrary to many who held the same political opinions in sunshine) held fast my integrity during the Foxites' interval of power, I found myself of course very well with the present administration. The present President of the Board of Controul in particular is my early and intimate friend since we carried our satchels together to the High School of Edinburgh. Think, my dear Carpenter, if this can be of any use to you. I am sure Robt. Dundas would like to serve my brother. I am also very well acquainted with your present Governor-General Lord Minto, though I believe he was angry with me for not *ratting* (as the phrase is) with others, after Pitt's death. Yet I think I have some influence with him ; at least I am sure I deserve it, for when he set his son in opposition to the Duke of Buccleuch, my chieftain and friend, in Roxburghshire, I could have done him more harm than I did. If you see him and choose to mention our close friendship and connections, I am sure you will not be the worse received. There is just now proposed a high Commission of Parliament for the reformation of some points of our Scotch law, and I have been pointed out by my friends to be Secretary to it—a post of considerable difficulty as well as distinction, but which if well discharged will pave the way to good appointments.

The public has been also very favourable to me so that I have profited both in pecuniary respects & in general esteem by the literary reputation I have acquired. All

this good fortune has not been without some alloy : my younger brothers affairs became involved & though I am not so great a loser as I at first expected yet the necessity of giving him some assistance join'd to the actual loss of a few hundreds have a little stinted my growth in prosperity. But I have had the satisfaction to extricate him & hope he will be fortunate in future. Remember me most kindly to Mrs. Carpenter : she will receive a copy of my new poem by these ships I have been pressing daily the printer to prepare one for her. Charlotte wrote two days ago : I write again with the book which I shall send to the care of our friends Smith & Jenyns, both to Mrs. Carpenter & you. Adieu dear Carpenter : think if the little Sunshine I have ever can be of use to you though not essentially yet in any trifling degree.—I am sure we have always shared in yours— My little infantry now four (two of each kind) are all well—your Godson Charles a stout cherry cheeked animal of two years old. Believe me Ever yours affectionately

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies and Familiar Letters*]

To FRANCIS DOUCE,¹ F.S.A.

EDINBURGH, 9 Feb. 1808

DEAR SIR,—I have deferred from day to day returning you my best thanks for the kind and most acceptable token of your remembrance, which I received about a fortnight since, and which, notwithstanding an unusual press of business, of various kinds, has been my companion for an hour or two every afternoon since. Every admirer of Shakespeare, and I hope that comprehends all that can read or hear reading, must be necessarily delighted with the profusion of curious and interesting illustration which your remarks contain.

¹ Francis Douce (1757-1834), antiquary and keeper of MSS. at the British Museum. His *Illustrations of Shakespeare* were issued in 1807.

I meant to have offered the few remarks that occurred to me while I was going through your volumes, which would at least have shown the attention I had paid in the perusal ; but I have never had a moment's time to accomplish my purpose. In particular, concerning the Fools of Shakespeare, a subject of so much curiosity, and which you have so much elucidated, it might be interesting to you to know, that fifty years ago there was hardly a great house in Scotland where there was not an *all-licensed* fool—half crazy and half knavish—many of whose *bon mots* are still recited and preserved. The late Duke of Argyle had a jester of this description, who stood at the sideboard among the servants, and was a great favourite, until he got into disgrace by rising up in the kirk before sermon, and proclaiming the bans of marriage between himself and my friend Lady Charlotte Campbell. So you see it is not so very long, at least in this country, since led captains, pimps, and players have superseded the *roguish* clowns of Shakespeare. But all this, with any other *scantlings* of information which have occurred to me, I must now reserve till I have the pleasure of returning my thanks in person, which will probably be in the course of a few weeks, as I have some prospect of being called to London this spring.

In this hope, I am, dear Sir, your much obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—The long-promised Marmion at length has the honour to kiss your ladyship's hands—I shall be most anxious to know he is acceptable & next how the Marquis likes him whom but that I think he is a little partial to my attempts I consider [as] among the

first judges in England—The book is under cover to Lord Castlereagh although as big as a family bible. I send this card separate that you may enquire for it so soon as your Ladyship thinks fit. My southward motions depend upon the springs with which you are acquainted. All here I find kindly anxious to serve me except the president who wishes to have a tool of his own a little more passive than he does me the honour to think me—but he is no formidable antagonist. Believe me in great haste ever
 ever Your most faithful & most grateful

W. S.

CASTLE STREET 16 *feb.* [1808]

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES CARPENTER

EDINBURGH *Feb.* 16. 1808

MY DEAR BROTHER,—This accompanies a copy of my new poem for Mrs. Carpenters kind acceptance I hope it will amuse her as much as she is so good as to say my former ditties did : there are very few hard words in it. I also hope it will reach you safe as Lady Minto is so good as to take charge of sending it with the Governor Generals baggage. Lord Minto & I used to be very great friends & if you should happen to see him I am sure his Lordship will remember me & perhaps you may experience some civility on my account which would give me very great pleasure indeed. I wrote to him with a copy of this same poem & will take the liberty to mention your name as indeed I have done before : it is very probable all this is of no consequence to you, yet it can do no harm & I only hope you will not think me officious. The present President of the Board of Controul is also my old & intimate friend & schoolfellow, so if you can devise any thing for your comfort or convenience or advantage I

would try my interest in your behalf which would give me the greatest pleasure possible if successful. I sincerely hope this will find Mrs. Carpenters health amended which I judge to be the case since she has alter'd her plan of coming to England before you. Most heartily do I hope that you will look this way together and soon. Your kindness will make you anxious about our present situation which is in every respect comfortable & promises daily to become more so. My literary attempts have been very useful in point of profit as well as for the degree of general regard which I may without vanity say that they have procured me. My present situation is that of one of the principal Clerks to our Court of Session, the income of which runs from £800 to £1000 a year. The worst is that the gentleman who retired to make way for me retains the appointments while I do the duty. But it gives me leisure for my literary pursuits by which by my sheriffdom & by my private fortune I can maintain my rank in society & even make money *en attendant* the death of the old life renter : this was rather a hard bargain but it was made when the administration was dissolved upon Pitts death : all was going to pieces & I was glad to swim ashore on a plank of the wreck or in a word to be provided any how ere the new people came in. Nobody to be sure could have foreseen that in a years time my friends were all to be in again : there is just now to be appointed a High Commission of Parliament to revise some of the structure & forms of our Scottish courts of Jurisprudence & I believe I am to be named Secretary to the Commissioners : this I suppose will be well paid but I am principally pleased with it as being a very respectable appointment conferr'd on me by our principal law Lords & Kings Council & consequently an honourable professional distinction. The employment will be but temporary but may have consequences of importance to my future lot in life if I give satisfaction in the discharge of it. I wrote to you the other day by a

little Cadet by name Alexander Russel a cousin German of mine who goes to Madras by these ships. Should chance throw him in your way I would be much obliged to you to shew him kindness. I suppose you think by this time that my cadet cousins grow up like crops of pease & beans but I assure you this is the last you are likely to hear of for I hope you will be home long before an aftercrop comes up of younger exportation commodities. I am sure you are obliged to us & we to you for I fancy our frozen climate raises a great number of the soldiers merchants & sailors that are transplanted to yours. My little nursery now two of each sex are thriving & hearty : your little namesake a merry cherry cheeked fellow with an unrestrain'd stock of health & spirits. I sincerely hope this will find you in health, Mrs. Carpenter quite recovered & your land in quiet : since Russia has quarrelled with us we are looking rather anxiously towards you from a general idea that Bonaparte has a scheme of marching an army through Persia against our India dominions. I am no believer in the possibility of executing such a plan though I think it not improbable he may attempt it as his success hitherto gives him a right to calculate on anything : he seems tired of the threat of invasion especially since the seizure of the Danish fleet which might have had their sails bent at this moment ready to sail north about to Ireland with 20000 Frenchmen had it not been for the precautionary measure of seizing their ships & stores. The emigration of the Royal family of Portugal to the Brazils is another of those wonderful events which our time has been destined to witness : its effect on the spirits of the Merchants has been that of a cordial. Once more dear Carpenter remember me kindly to your lady & thank her in my name for her affectionate letter to which I am sending a handsome reply by the ships. Charlotte also writes by the ships & besides this by the little cousin Cadet. I must have worse than usual ill luck if none

of these letters come to hand. Believe me Your affectionate brother

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES

DEAR SIR,—I have been shockingly ungrateful ; but I have been moreover very busy, which I hope will be some apology for what the Scriptures state to be greatly worse than the sin of witchcraft. In evidence of my diligence, I have to request your acceptance of a thumping quarto entitled “Marmion,” in which you will find I have availed myself with suitable acknowledgments of your tale of Sir Ralph Bulmer, and the ballad of the feud between the Riddleys and the Featherstonehaugh family. I have your acc[ou]nt of the Fugitives *in salva custodia*. The necessity of diligently comparing each sheet of Sadler’s Letters with the original (though, thank God, that labour I have no concern with), and the press of business at my friend Ballantyne the printer’s, has occasioned some delay in that work. I am not yet arrived so far as to profit by your kind annotations. The book with the MSS. concerning the Rebellion shall be taken care of and returned ; and I shall be happy indeed if the time and manner of a visit to London, which I believe I must make this season, will allow me to pay my personal compliments to you upon the occasion.

When you cast your eye over “Marmion,” remember mercy in your judgment. I had idly come under an obligation to produce that *preux chevalier* by a certain time,—sufficient indeed to have done him ample justice in the way of arming and equipment, but some very unpleasant family affairs left me neither head nor heart to work that kind of work for six months ; and at last I had nothing for it but dispatch, which was so rapid, that of the last

four Cantos no part was written twice over ; and it was printed sheet by sheet, as fast as composed. This prepares you for all its faults. Its merits, for some I must hope it has, will speak for themselves.

I am in great haste ; but with best compliments to your lady, Ever your truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 20 *Feb.* 1808.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

EDINBURGH, *February* 23, 1808

Sleepest thou, wakest thou, George Ellis ?

BE it known that this letter is little better than a *fehde brief*,—as to the meaning of which is it not written in Wachter's Thesaurus and the Lexicon of Adelung¹ ? To expound more vernacularly, I wrote you, I know not how long ago, a swinging epistle of and concerning German Romances, with some discoveries not of my own discovering, and other matter not furiously to the present purpose. And this I caused to be conveyed to you by *ane gentil knizt*, Sir William Forbes, *knizt*, who assures me he left it as directed, at Sir Peter Parker's.² " Since," to vary my style to that of the ledger, " none of yours." To avenge myself of this unusual silence, which is a manifest usurpation of my privileges (being the worst

¹ Wachter, Johan Georg : *Glossarium Germanicum, continens origines et antiquitates linguæ Germanicæ hodiernæ*, Lipsiæ, 1727 ; and Adelung, Johan Christoph : *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, &c., Leipzig, 1793-1801.

² Ellis replied on the 4th March that he " was at present tolerably awake " ; had met the worthy knight Sir W. Forbes " at that time . . . on his ride to Russia," and had sent on his recommendation to Leveson-Gower (ambassador) and other Russian friends ; that he had been ill and could now write only using both hands ; thanks Scott for the epistle written " *Mæonii carminis alite* " and also for the *Fehde-brief*, " which my apparent negligence certainly did not deserve," and thereupon gives his criticism of *Mæmion*. A *Fehde-brief* is " a challenge," *Ausforderung*.

correspondent in the world, Heber excepted), I have indited to you an epistle in verse, and that I may be sure of its reaching your hands, I have caused to be thrown off 2000 copies thereof, that you may not plead ignorance.

This is oracular, but will be explained by perusing the Introduction to the 5th canto of a certain dumpy quarto, entitled *Marmion, a Tale of Flodden-field*, of which I have to beg your acceptance of a copy. "So wonder on till time makes all things plain." One thing I am sure you will admit, and that is, that—"the hobby-horse is *not* forgot;" nay, you will see I have paraded in my Introductions a plurality of hobby-horses—a whole stud, on each of which I have, in my day, been accustomed to take an airing. This circumstance will also gratify our friend Douce, whose lucubrations have been my study for some days. They will, I fear, be *caviare* to the multitude, and even to the *soi-disant* connoisseurs, who have never found by experience what length of time, of reading, and of reflection, is necessary to collect the archæological knowledge of which he has displayed such profusion. The style would also, in our Scotch phrase, *thole amends*, i.e. admit of improvement. But his extensive and curious researches place him at the head of the class of black-letter antiquaries; and his knowledge is communicated without the manifest irritation, which his contemporaries have too often displayed in matters of controversy—without ostentation, and without self-sufficiency. I hope the success of his work will encourage this modest and learned antiquary to give us more collectanea. There are few things I read with more pleasure. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Ellis. I have some hopes of being in town this spring, but I fear you will be at Bath. When you have run over *Marmion*, I hope you will remember how impatient I shall be to hear your opinion *sans phrase*. I am sensible I run some risk of being thought to fall below my former level, but those that will

play for the gammon must take their chance of this. I am also anxious to have particular news of your health. Ever yours faithfully,

W. S.

[*Lockhart*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH 26th *Febry.*, 1808

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I have your letter & must be satisfied with the mode of publishing the Round Table as our fathers in the Row are pleased to appoint. There is indeed a propriety in its being of the same size with your other Romances ; although I think it a work of a very different description. I was I believe to have had the use of a very ancient copy of the Morte Arthur said to be in possession of Mr. Dent the member of Parliament commonly & alliteratively termed Dog-Dent. If you can get at him I presume he will not be so much of the Dog in the Manger as to refuse you the same favour. I would offer my assistance but the ladder by which I hoped to scale the top-gallants of his favour was rather too long & will not bear to have another *round* added to it. But this will perhaps find you in London & with Heber before whom in all Libraries

— open locks
whoever knocks

You can be at no loss to get at least a sight of this curiosity. Concluding that you will be soon in London I have requested John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street to send to Longman's care for you a copy of my new poem Marmion a goodly volume in point of size but I had not time to write the poem shorter. Looking over Madoc the other day I found I had committed a piracy unconsciously upon an idea of yours. I have said in a description of a distant view of a battle I have mentioned the

— Plumed crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave

which although my mind was upon Henry IVths white plume is exactly similar to that of Madoc "floating like foam on the wave tempest." If my powers were equal to my sense of honesty as I would to heaven they were I would offer you the fourfold requital of the Levitical law, but that would be no easy matter. I have been very much interested lately with the Remains of H. K. White¹ which however left a very melancholy impression on my mind. Was there no patron for such a man but Simeon and Wilberforce who with the best intentions in the world seem to have encouraged his killing himself by religious enthusiasm. I am afraid that sort of people do not recollect that enthusiasm like other potent draughts should be tempered to the strength of the patient. A dram which hardly warms the veins of a rough-nerved Scotchman will drive to frenzy a more sensitive system. I wish Simeon & Levi would confine their operations to hard headed *cantabs* and make no excursions to Nottingham for cramping young poets—

I have some very curious letters from a spy sent into Scotland at the time of the great Northern Rebellion in which there is a good deal mention made of the Nortons.² I have written to Wordsworth to offer him copies or extracts but adding that I suppose his *siege is finished* as Vertot said when he received some original materials from Malta. You make me very curious to see his poem : he is a great master of the passions.

¹ Henry Kirke White (1785-1806), the minor poet whom Southey overpraised. A Sizarship at St. John's, Cambridge was secured for him in 1805 by the famous Evangelical leader, Charles Simeon, who was attracted by his piety, not, apparently, as Scott thinks, its inspirer. His health broke down and he died in his rooms at college in October 1806. Southey edited his *Remains*—which included, besides poems, essays on religious and philosophic topics entitled *Melancholy Hours*. Byron, who could not appreciate Keats, tried also to exalt White.

² In a letter of 11th February 1808 Southey tells him that "Wordsworth has completed a most masterly poem upon the fate of the Nortons ; two or three lines in the old Ballad of the Rising in the North gave him the hint." The information which Scott was ready to supply was, as a fact, disturbing to Wordsworth's account of the events, as will be seen later.

I have some hopes we may meet in London. God speed your *magnum opus*. I venture to prophesy it will be generally interesting. It will give me great pleasure to learn that my preux Chevalier Marmion has afforded you any pleasure. He is popular here but we are you know national in our taste so I wait my doom from London and shall abide it *sans peur et sans reproche*, taking that phrase a little differently than as it applies to Bayard.

Believe me with great regard Dear Southey Yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

Should this find you at Keswick do not fail to remember me to your fireside. I give you joy of the fortunate addition to it—

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I am both shocked and surprized at the second Miscarriage of Marmion. I saw the copy duly addressed but I suspect the brute of a bookseller has confounded it with some others that were going by sea. I learned two days ago that the Princesses¹ copy had come safe & yours ought to have reached you the day after. If you go to Blackheath her Royal Highness will perhaps shew you her copy for which James Skene made some pretty drawings of the scenery described in the poem. I hasten to remedy the error of the bookseller by sending another copy addressed to Lord Castle-reagh which must be in his office at the moment this reaches your Ladyship's hands unless as Othello says "theres magic in the web on't."—When the stray copy arrives (for it will arrive sooner or later) Lady Maria will I hope do me the honour to accept it—I am impatient for the Marquis's opinion of the last canto, which I am better

¹ From Mrs. Hayman, writing on the 23rd February.

pleased with than with any of the former ; but that is no good criterion after all.

I shall be much pleased if the proposed appointment takes place in my favour not merely for the emolument but because it will give me an early opportunity of making myself thoroughly master of the new forms of judicial procedure which may qualify me for promotion should I continue to merit the favour of my friends—I am on the eve of concluding a bargain with a bookseller¹ to edit Swift's work for which he offers me 1500 guineas it will occupy me occasionally for two years but labour is to me really pleasure & the profit is not to be despised. In the meantime I will collect ideas for my Highland poem which I intend to begin two years hence if I have life health & spirits.

I quite agree with your Ladyship that Lord M. having taken so kind an interest in my appointment will manage it in his own way with the Chancellor—My motions are of course at present unsettled. I would rather know what is likely to be settled about the Scotch bill before I come up. Our Lord Advocate has promised me timely notice—Believe me unfeignedly your faithful & obliged ..

EDINR. 28th Febry 1808

W. S.

I send this letter with Marmion by my own servant to the general post office so there can be no second mistake unless among Lord C's clerks—This being Sunday I have adjourned scolding the bookseller till tomorrow—meanwhile I am

Gathering my brows like gathering storm
Nursing my wrath to keep it warm.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

¹ See the letter to Constable of 25th July 1808. The signed contract is now at Abbotsford.

TO MRS. PRINGLE OF WHITEBANK¹

MY DEAR MRS. PRINGLE,—I am truly flattered & affected by your applause. A great French critic says *rien n'est beau que le vrai* and were the counterpart true, and that which is *vrai* always *beau*, my verses respecting my little sporting friends² would have some title to public favour, since nothing is more sincere than my feelings towards them. We will talk over them one day soon. Meanwhile believe me, dear Madam Your much obliged and faithful

W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET, Thursday [Feb.-March 1808]

[Our Forefathers]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

DEAR LADY LOUISA,—Day after day I hoped to have had it in my power to have taken a ride as far as Newbattle or Dalkeith before your Ladyship left the vicinity of Dun Edin and day after day the pressure of official business increased by the indisposition of one of my colleagues rendered my excursion impossible. So as I learn from Mr. Alison³ that this will find you at Tynningham I must take this mode of wishing your Ladyship a good journey and all health and happiness— I have thought

¹ Scott's letter is undated, but Mrs. Pringle's is 25th February.—*Walpole Collection*.

² Mrs. Pringle had written to thank Scott for the lines in *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto II. :

And much I miss those sportive boys
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth, etc.

³ Presumably Archibald Alison, the author of the *Essays on Taste*, "the most distinguished of the Episcopalian clergy of Edinburgh and, so far as I know, of Scotland. A most excellent and agreeable man ; richly imbued with literature ; a great associate of Dugald Stewart, Playfair, Dr. Gregory, Jeffrey, Francis Horner and all the eminent among us."—COCKBURN.

on your reading about the death of Constance and with all the respect which (sans phrase) I entertain for every thing you honour me with I have not made up my mind to the alteration and here are my reasons— Clara has no wish to embitter Marmions last moments and is only induced to mention the death of Constance because she observes that the wounded mans anxiety for her deliverance prevents his attending to his own spiritual affairs. It seems natural however that knowing by the Abbess or however you please the share which Marmion had in the fate of Constance she should pronounce the line assigned to her in such a manner as perfectly conveyed to his conscience the whole truth although her gentleness avoided conveying it in direct terms. We are to consider too that Marmion had from various workings of his own mind been led to suspect the fate of Constance—so that the train being ready laid the slightest hint of her fate communicated the whole tale of terror to his conviction— Were I to read the passage I would hesitate a little like one endeavouring to seek a soft mode of conveying painful intelligence

In vain for Constance is your zeal
She—died at Holy Isle

Perhaps after all this is too fine spun and requires more from my gentle readers to fill up my sketch than I am entitled to exact. But I would rather put in an explanatory couplet describing Constance's manner of speaking the words than make her communication more full or specific. Mrs. Scott has quite recovered her health and feels no inconvenience unless from her regret at being so awkwardly deprived of the honour of your Ladyships company. We have Miss Baillie here as a visitor at present. I hope she will make some little stay in Edinburgh.

I have been much distressed by the late bad account of dear little Lord Scotts health. God grant he may recover—out of my own family there is no loss I would so

deeply deprecate. Believe me ever dear Lady Louisa
Your obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 3d March 1808

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MISS SMITH ¹

MY DEAR MISS SMITH,—My late engagements have made me seem very ungrateful when I would most wish to seem otherwise but I throw myself upon your goodness to admit an apology founded upon various avocations literary and poetical not to mention the daily discharge of official duty. As a sort of peace offering I have to beg you to accept what I hope is already in your hands a copy of my new poem called by the hard name of “Marmion.” I shall be much flattered indeed if you like it half as well as my little folks did the Panorama your kind gift which they have studied and quoted every day since to the great edification of Papa who daily learns something he did not know before.

We have Mrs. Siddons here—I believe to take her farewell of the Edinburgh audience. I observe you have been performing along with her in town and was most happy to hear (for I did not fail to enquire) that you sustained the comparison as triumphantly as your warmest friends could wish. I wish London had been within 100 miles. I would certainly have come to see you both on the same stage.—We have Miss Baillie ² here at present who is certainly the best dramatic writer whom Britain has produced since the days of Shakespeare and Massinger. I hope you have had time to look into her tragedies (the

¹ Sarah Smith replied on 12th March : “ On Wednesday I received your darling letter and the following Day your welcome present of Marmion. . . . I have read Miss Baillie, did I not promise *you*. She is indeed to be esteemed an honour to her Country.”

² See note, p. 56.

comedies you may [pass] over without any loss) for I am sure you will find much to delight you and I venture to prophecy you will one day have [an] opportunity to distinguish yourself in some of her characters. I mean if the real taste for the Drama independant of shew and scenery should ever happen to revive, of which I think your being permitted to remain upon the *shelf* as you call it is no very promising symptom.—We have an actor here of considerable merit called *Young*¹; he is a well-educated and gentlemanlike man and an enthusiast in his profession. I sometimes have the pleasure of seeing him in private and like him very much.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest and best remembrances—and the children desire a thousand thanks which they hope will not be less acceptable for my laziness—John Murray Bookseller Fleetstreet has directions to send you *Marmion*. I flatter myself you will make inquiry after it in case it has not reached you before this letter. I have some hopes to be in town this spring when I will seek an early opportunity to express personally how much I am your faithful and affectionate friend

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 4th March. 1808

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 13th March 1808

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I see with pleasure that both the *Marmions* have been at last received—what should have delayed the delivery of the first I cannot guess. As to the Holland House copy assuredly I know nothing of it not holding any correspondence with that mansion. The bookseller here satisfied me by showing his invoices that he sent off none so early as that to the Princess and your

¹ Charles Mayne Young (1777-1856) made his first appearance in Edinburgh in 1802. "He was taken up by Scott, whose friendship he retained, and with whom he more than once stayed."—LOCKHART.

Ladyship's. I suspect strongly that Miller¹ who has a share in the Book had fallen on some means to get a copy privately being anxious I presume to gratify the Hollands since he became purchaser of Fox's work. All the Whigs here are in arms against *Marmion*—if I had satirised Fox they could have borne it but a secondary place for the god of their idolatry puts them beyond the slender degree of patience which displaced patriots usually possess. I make them wellcome to cry till they are hoarse against both the book and author as they are not in the habit of having majorities upon their side. I suppose the crossed critics of Holland House will take the same tone in your Metropolis.

You ask me why I do not rather think of original production than editing the works of others and I will frankly tell your Ladyship the reason. In the first place no one acquires a certain degree of popularity without exciting an equal degree of malevolence among those who either from rivalry or the mere wish to pull down what others have set up are always ready to catch the first occasion to lower the favour'd individual to what they call his *real standard*. Of this I have enough of experience and my political interferences however useless to my friends have not failed to make me more than the usual number of enemies. I am therefore bound in justice to myself and to those whose good opinion has hitherto protected me not to peril myself too frequently. The naturalists tell us that if you destroy the web which the spider has just made the insect must spend many days in inactivity till he has assembled within his person the materials necessary to weave another. Now after writing a work of imagination one feels [in] nearly the same exhausted state with the spider. I believe no man now alive writes more rapidly than I do (no great recommendation), but I never think of making verses till I have a sufficient stock

¹ William Miller, Albemarle Street, publisher of Scott's *Dryden*, who had also a fourth share of *Marmion*.

of poetical ideas to supply them. I would as soon join the Israelites in Egypt in their heavy task of making bricks without clay. Besides I know as a small farmer that good husbandry consists in not taking the same crop too frequently from the same soil and as turnips come after wheat according to the best rules of agriculture I take it that an edition of Swift will do well after such a scourging crop as *Marmion*. Meantime I have by no means relinquished my thoughts of a Highland poem but am gradually collecting the ideas and information necessary for that task—Perhaps I shall visit Green Erin to collect what I can learn of Swift : if so I hope you will be at Barons Court when I undertake my pilgrimage to your native Land of Saints—My journey to London is unsettled, for Robert Dundas or rather his Lady seem to think there is no immediate occasion for it—As Ld Melville will be in town shortly after this reaches your Ladyship I fancy his presence will quicken the passing of the Scotch Bill and when that has passed parlt. my motions will be decided by the order of the Commission appointed under—that is—if I am successful in being named their Secretary.

Duchess of Gordon is here very gay and very angry with me—I believe I have been a little negligent in my attentions upon her but she should consider how little my time is at my own disposal and pity instead of abusing me. We are however very civil when we meet.

My poor dear Lord Scott will never leave my memory. I had a sort of feudal attachment to the boy who was all the friends of his family could wish—Dalkeith and his Lady are gone to Bothwell as I learn by a letter from Ld Montagu—I hardly know how the arrow of fate could have hit a more vulnerable point—But great and small we are alike her butt. One thing alone is out of her power—[the] unalterable and sincere regard with which I am dear Lady Abercorn your much obliged and very faithful

W. S.

P.S. You will be pleased to hear that the Princess¹ honoured me so far as to send me an elegant silver cup in acknowledgement of the compliment pd. in *Marmion* to the D. of Brunswick's Memory—

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO MRS. DUNDAS²

MY DEAR MRS. DUNDAS,—I was honoured by your letter & truly sorry for the state of Mr. Dundas' health—I hope he is now better and that he will not let his freindly zeal for Lord Wellesley or Lord any body else interfere with the necessary care of himself. *Marmion* has by this time reachd their hands—the Whigs here are furious at the inferior rank in which I have placed the God of their Idolatry & my own conscience is on the other hand a little twinged at having done him fully more than justice. But he was a great man & is gone—& that must be the justification to myself—as for the others *Marmion* has been armd to little purpose if he cannot keep his gröund in a good cause. I am led just now to trouble you with these few lines on account of the situation of a very deserving young man a Cousin German of mine educated in the Companys service & who has made several voyages as first & second Mate & bears a most excellent character. I believe he commanded an extra ship one voyage. His father Walter Scott of Reaburn is a Scotch Laird of the old stamp who loves a hunter & a fox chase better than any son he has in the world. As however he is of an old branch of the Buccleuch family

¹ The Princess of Wales, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick :

Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme ?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse, etc.

Marmion, Introduction to Third Canto.

² Wife of Robert Dundas of Arniston, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, 1801.

& a voter in Roxburghshire I would upon any other occasion have endeavoured to interest them in behalf of this young man his third son but the melancholy state of Dalkeith House precludes all thought of this. I am unfeignedly reluctant to intrude on Mr. Dundas's freindship yet in the present case I am sure you will excuse my preferring a petition whatever success it may have.

This said youth "Hugh Scott" by name writes me after two months unsuccessful solicitation that he thinks if backd with Mr. D.'s countenance he might obtain the Command of a ship in David Scotts house & if not perhaps a nomination for a Bombay or China Voyage for next season or that following. This is the object as to the practicability or propriety of the request I am no judge : but if it be what Mr D. can do without interfering with other engagements or departing from his usual rules he will serve an excellent seaman & a very worthy tho' unprotected young man. The death of a near relation who had considerable India influence has in a manner renderd him freindless in his line of profession. I beg my best Compliments to Mr. Dundas and with every apology for this intrusion I am with great respect Dear Madam Your most obedient & obliged humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 13 *March* 1808.

Honble Mrs. Dundas.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

CASTLE STREET, 3d *April* 1808

DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—Accept with your usual goodness a copy of the Life of Dryden of which Mr. Miller has thrown off a few separate from the works. We have often heard of a rivulet of text meandering through a meadow of margin. But these books (saving that, the

shape is square) rather look like St. James's Square with the pool of water in the midst of it. My Southern motions remain uncertain till I learn whether the Commission of Parliament meets in London or in Edinr.

The *Morning Chronicle* of the 29th March has made a pretty story of the cancel of page 10th of *Marmion*, which your Ladyship cannot but recollect was reprinted for the sole purpose of inserting the lines suggested so kindly by the Marquis

“For talents mourn untimely lost
When best employed and wanted most”

I suppose from the carelessness of those who arranged the book for binding this sheet may not in a copy or two have been right placed, and the worthy Editor affirms kindly that this was done that I might have copies to send to Mr. Pitt's friends in which these lines do not occur !!! My publishers here who forwarded the books have written in great wrath to contradict the story and were surprised to find I had more inclination to laugh at it. This is a punishment for appropriating my neighbour's goods. I suppose it would surprise Mr. *Morning Chronicle* considerably to know that the couplet in question was written by so distinguished a friend of Mr. Pitt as Lord Abercorn.¹

The Princess of Wales sent me a most elegant silver cup and cover with a compliment upon *Marmion*, particularly on the part respecting the Duke of Brunswick which was very flattering.

When your Ladyship can find an opportunity to let me know that you like the Life of Dryden that you are

¹“One word more as to these personal allusions. While he was correcting a second proof of the passage where Pitt and Fox are mentioned together, at Stanmore Priory in April 1807, Lord Abercorn suggested that the compliment to the Whig statesman ought to be still further heightened and several lines—

For talents mourn untimely lost
When best employed and wanted most, etc.—

were added accordingly. I have heard indeed that they came from the Marquis's own pen.”—LOCKHART. Scott's words here seem to imply that Abercorn wrote them, but this may be an excess of politeness.

well and that I live in your remembrance I need not say how agreeable it will be to your most respectful and truly grateful

W. SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE ¹

1808

DEAR SHARPE,—I return you “Spanish Vengeance,” wt. best thanks for the pleasure the perusal has afforded. It contains much fine poetry and many striking situations, but rather belongs to the *second* school of the English drama—to that of Congreve and Rowe—than to that of Shakespeare and Massinger. Whether it would succeed on the stage I cannot tell, but I am sure many many far inferior have been received with good approbation. Should you ever think of this, a few harshnesses in the language might be smoothed away with advantage. I have marked one or two things for consideration in pencil.—Believe me, yours truly,

W. S.

Friday.

[*Sharpe's Letters*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES

MY DEAR SIR,—My best thanks attend you for the curious and valuable additions which your letter of 29th February enables me to make to the letters in Sadler's collection, relating to the Grand Northern Rebellion. Heartily do I wish it were possible to have the Bishop of Durham's letter transcribed. Mr. Ellis of the Museum, at the request of Mr. Rose, was so good as to promise me his assistance to this effect ; but having been fre-

¹ The letters to Sharpe are very difficult to date as the writers seldom give the year. In a letter dated April 1808 Sharpe writes to Miss Isabella Sharpe : “Walter Scott has redd my play, and as both he and the Campbells approve of it, I will certainly endeavour to get it acted.”

quently on the point of coming to London, I have always delayed writing till I should see him. I would not, by any means, burden you with a task so odious and fatiguing as transcription, but perhaps there may be some one about the Museum capable of that labour and willing to accept of a recompense for his pains ; should such a person be to be had, I would without scruple request you, supposing the Lansdowne papers now arranged, to take the trouble of pointing out such passages or letters as may tend to throw new light on the state of the North in Queen Elizabeth's reign. After all, that part of Sadler's Letters will owe to you all that is curious in the illustrations. I heartily wish the whole had been under your management, as I am certain you would have done them much more justice than is in my power. As for Prince Charles, "He, that wandering knight so fair," we will talk about him when we meet. I have always thought of a Highland poem before hanging my harp on the willows ; and perhaps it would be no bad setting for such a tale to suppose it related for her amusement, in the course of his wanderings after the fatal field of Culloden. Flora Macdonald, Kingburgh, Lochiel, the Kennedies, and many other characters of dramatic [interest] might be introduced ; and the time is now past away when the theme would have had both danger and offence in it. When you have read over Marmion, which has more individuality of character than the Lay, although it wants a sort of tenderness which the personage of the old Minstrel gave to my first-born romance, you will be a better judge, whether I should undertake a work which will depend less on incident and description than on the power of distinguishing and marking the *dramatis personae*. But all this is in embryo, the creation of your letter, and may never go further. When you look into the notes of the aforesaid Marmion, you will see how valuable a correspondent you have been to me.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is here at present ; he is,

I find, an old college friend and correspondent of yours. He is a very ingenious as well as agreeable young man, and, I think, will be an excellent poet, when the luxuriance of his fancy is a little repressed by severer taste. I never saw so excellent a drawer of comic figures, for I will not debase his sketches by calling them caricatures. He is making some extracts from our MSS. in the Advocates' Library: I heartily wish you would one day find it absolutely necessary to do the same.

I must not finish my letter without saying, that if you can make a contract with an amanuensis for me, I will request Mr. Miller, bookseller, of Albemarle-street, to pay him the amount of his labours.

I do not know if you are so much attached to chivalrous poetry as to admire the ancient metrical romances. If so, you will be interested in a plan which I have greatly at heart, namely, to have these venerable poems carefully published. For this purpose I have found a patient, and at the same time an enthusiastic editor in the person of Henry Weber, an Anglo-German.¹ He has made tran-

¹ "Scott's correspondence, about the time when his Dryden was published, is a good deal occupied with a wild project of his friend Henry Weber—that of an extensive edition of our Ancient Metrical Romances, for which, in their own original dimensions, the enthusiastic German supposed the public appetite to have been set on edge by the 'Specimens' of Ellis, and imperfectly gratified by the text of Sir Tristrem. Scott assured him that Ellis's work had been popular, rather in spite than by reason of the antique verses introduced here and there among his witty and sparkling prose; while Ellis told him, with equal truth, that the Tristrem had gone through two editions, simply owing to the celebrity of its editor's name; and that, of a hundred that had purchased the book, ninety-nine had read only the preface and note, but not one syllable of 'True Thomas's' quaint Inglis'."—LOCKHART. Other works of this fertile year, to which allusions occur, are the projected edition of Swift; the editing of the *State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*, and *A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts* selected from various sources but chiefly from the library of the late Lord Somers; the completion of Strutt's *Queen-Hoo Hall*; a reprint of Captain Carleton's *Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession*; a similar edition of the *Memoirs of Robert Cary Earl of Monmouth*—"each of these being a single octavo," printed by Ballantyne and published by Constable. Among others whom he helped to get a publisher is John Struthers, author of *The Poor Man's Sabbath*. He had undertaken also, it will be seen, to write a Life of Thomson "from some original materials."

scripts to the amount of many thousand lines. I think I could get some of my friends in London to add some notes, and would what I could myself. My present idea is to get so many names as will ensure the bookseller against loss (for such a book will be "caviare for the multitude,") and give some little recompense for the editor. I think, if I can get 100 names at 5l. 5s. I can afford them three quarto volumes of romantic poetry. Will you be one of my round table? We do not intend to publish those which Ritson has already given. Believe me ever, dear Surtees, Your truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 4th April, 1808.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

EDIN. 7th April 1808

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—I was honoured with your Ladyships letter this morning. Unless the report in question be an express punishment from heaven for your hiding your talent in a napkin or that "there's magic in the web on't," I cannot offer any satisfactory solution. I never I am positive mentioned your Ladyships name¹ to the high personage in question or in writing to Miss Hayman the only Lady of her household with whom I have any correspondence. Skene as your Ladyship may readily believe knows nothing of the intended publication and was never so happy as to see any of the editors verses. I think the artist who made the little sketch at the beginning of Ugly Meg would hardly presume to mention it as I cautioned him on the subject. The poem was

¹ Appended to the Abbotsford copy of this letter is a note by Lady Louisa: "Answer to a letter I wrote in a foolish fuss about a foolish fib of the Princess of Wales viz. that he was editing my poem." Lady Louisa's letter about the incident and Scott's theft of her "Ugly Meg" is printed in Douglas's *Familiar Letters*, vol. i. pp. 107-9. The original is in the Walpole Collection.

never given out of my own hand nor mentioned as your Ladyships although I must plead guilty to having shown it to one or two literary friends as a piracy which I had committed upon a Lady of my acquaintance. If it is possible that the little drawing has been thus converted into a set of embellishments by Skene, the six pages of Manuscript into fifteen copies of a printed book wire wove hot-pressed and with a suitable margin I shall deeply regret being the cause however innocently of having done any thing that could contribute to so wonderful a transformation. Yet I can hardly think it as I am certain I never showed the poem to more than three persons. I cannot find in my heart to condemn Ugly Meg to the flames as a witch being convinced she had so very little to do with the mysterious report in question but in future she shall be condemn'd to as severe seclusion as if she was the fairest Circassian in the seven Towers. Depend upon it my dear Lady Louisa that if any enquiry is made at me by her Royal Highness upon this subject I will attend most heedfully and pointedly to your injunctions. I must just say if I am pointedly charged with the existence of Ugly Meg that she had been reclaimed by your Ladyship in consequence of some reports which had gone abroad of her being about to be given to the world and that I had forgotten every line of her. By the way I forgot to mention that I *never* showed Ugly Meg to any one since your Ladyship made my plunder lawful ; so that I have been in all respects a thief of honour.—I think it by no means unlikely that a jumble may have been made by that long tongued Gossip Fame between the sermon which *was* printed the poem which was *not* printed, the drawings which Mr. Skene *did* make for the princess, the drawings which he did *not* make for Ugly Meg and out of this hodge podge with a considerable mixture of unadulterated *lye* the cup has been brewed which your Ladyship regards with so much terror. I am less surprised at any thing of the

kind as by a process equally well founded and oracular I had the inexpressible happiness to see myself but the other day pronounced by the Morning Chronicle guilty of garbling my own poem and giving one sort of book to Mr. Pitts friends and another to the public yet I believe that your Ladyship is more teased with a report the nature of which is not only innocent but would if true do your talents honour than I am with one that would argue me guilty of equal meanness and folly. But the feelings of a professed author and such I must be while my family continues to require my exertions get very callous to this species of scandal. I have adopted your Ladyships kind suggestion about the speech of Constance but after much consideration have placed only one hyphen or dash to express her confusion. The death of poor dear Lord Scott¹ was such a stunning blow to me, that I really felt for some time totally indifferent to the labours of literary correction. I had very great hopes from that boy, who was of an age to form, on the principles of his father and grandfather, his feelings towards the numerous families who depend on them. But God's will be done. I intended to have omitted the lines referring to him in *Marmion* in the second edition ; for as to adding any, I could as soon write the *Iliad*. But I am now glad I altered my intention, as Lady Dalkeith has sent for the book, and dwells with melancholy pleasure on whatever recalls the memory of the poor boy. She has borne her distress like an angel, as she is, and always has been ; but God only can cure the wounds he inflicts.

Marmion in consequence of an unexampled demand

¹ " Lord Scott, the young heir of Buccleuch, whose casual absence from 'Yarrow's bowers' was regretted in that same epistle [Introduction to Canto Second of *Marmion*] (addressed to his tutor, Mr. Marriott) . . . died a few days after *Marmion* was published."—LOCKHART. Of Mr. Marriott, chaplain and tutor, Mrs. MacCunn says : " It is unfortunate that we know [him] chiefly through his correspondence with Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. The uneasy straining after wit, the corrosive attitude towards all enthusiasm, are common to all Kirkpatrick Sharpe's correspondents, and Marriott has not escaped the taint." See *Sir Walter Scott's Friends*.

has been hurried through the press & the second edition is on the eve of publication. Millar in Albemarle street will have a copy of which I have to intreat your kind acceptance. A copy of the life of Dryden will also kiss your hands in a day or two. I either did write or intended to write a few lines along with the last mentioned book but I was in such a hurry at dispatching matters with my printer who was to carry the books to London that I have absolutely forgotten which— Adieu dear Lady Louisa. I regret I am not the Knight for whom it is reserved to break the charm which has converted a high born and distressful Lady into a professed authoress. I have no doubt it will soon disclose of itself

For never spell by fairy laid
With strong enchantment bound a glade
Beyond the bounds of night

Ever your obliged WALTER SCOTT¹
[*Abbotsford Copies*]

To [JAMES] BALLANTYNE

[*April* 1808]..

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—As you are going to town before me I wish you to be possessd of the outlines of a little adventure which I think might be conducted with great success if under the management of our friend in Albemarle Street. Constables projected Swift will find me serious work for two years but I do not anticipate that it will be half so difficult as Dryden all the sources of information lying within reach ; & you know that while labouring at Dryden I found time not only to make two trips to England but to write Marmion. I therefore wish to provide for occupation of my idle time as I intend to write no more poetry for two years & I have turnd my thoughts to making a classical collection of our

¹ According to *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio* (1898), Lady Louise had endorsed the transcript thus : “ Answer to a letter I wrote in a foolish fuss about a foolish *fib* of the Princess of Wales, viz. : that I was editing my poems.”

English tales and Romances of wonder with notes & critical prefaces.¹ I understand something of the kind has been lately attempted but I have no doubt of being able in a department which I understand but too well to bear down all competition. I have several translations by myself & others from the German and other languages with which such a collection might be enriched. The best eastern tales ought of course to be included as the persian, arabian & so forth with notes on the manners & some enquiry into the authenticity of each collection. The work should be published on the plan of the well known Cabinet des fées. I should like very much to know Millars opinion on such a speculation perhaps to publish six volumes yearly with a good engraving to each if he liked it. On the subject of editorship I am inclined to be moderate as I do not mean to give my name to the titlepage. If it should be found necessary to add any original matter of length that of course would be a separate consideration. If Mr. Millar dislikes it he will of course observe profound secrecy & you will then proceed as I shall further direct you by letter for I am by no means inclined lightly to relinquish my plan being possessed of considerable materials for giving it effect.

This letter will serve you for a memorandum of one or two other trifles.

Inclosed is an order from Mr. Polwhele for some poems from Messrs. Cadell & Davies. Mr. Millar will be so kind as to receive them & they may be sent down with my Dodsley. In requital of Mr. P's civility I wish to send him a[n] 8vo Marmion & Lay which Mr. Millar or Murray will readily give you packed up for Revd. Mr. Polwhele Kenwyn, Truro care of Messrs. Cadell & Davies.

¹ Accordingly James Ballantyne proposed this to Longman and Rees, who replied on 6th May suggesting the need of sharing such a project with other booksellers, as had just been done with Alex. Chalmers' *British Essayists* and was being done with *The British Novelists*, in process of editing by Mrs. Barbauld. Will Scott "furnish us with a rough list of Tales sufficient to make about 25 vols like the *British Essayists*."

Item see if you can find me a few 4to. volumes of old plays about the age of Charles II. They sell for about 5 or 7/ a volume & are to be found chiefly in old Book shops. Pick up also if you meet with such any wonderful tales as the History of Peter Wilkins¹ & the like. You can hardly go wrong if you do not give too much money. I beg you will write to me when you get to town & am with regard yours very truly

W SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Sunday*—

Will you ask Mr. Millar what he is doing with Thomson? —I wish it to be going on immediatly.

(Undated.)

[*Signet Library*]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—As it may be of consequence to you to have early information of the politics of the Trade here I have to inform you (for your private ear) that Constables principal errand to Londn. is to establish an agency office or shop there for the sale of his own books; to be managed by Park & young Hunter. This I think he may repent unless he keeps a very tight hand over them, & so I hinted to him.

Among the copies of Marmion orderd for friends is one intended for John Marriot which as I could give no direction has not I dare say been forwarded by Murray. You may possibly learn his address from Mr. Nott & I beg you will take the trouble to see the book is forwarded.

Miller has suggested the Republication of Somers

¹ *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man*: relating particularly his shipwreck near the South Pole . . . his meeting with a Gawry or flying woman, whose Life he preserved and afterwards married her . . . &c. &c., 1750, and frequently reprinted. The author was Robert Paltock, an attorney of Clement's Inn.

tracts¹ which would in one point of view be a capital job (12 vols in quarto). I have made my terms therefore as low as he can well expect my name vizt. £105, a volume which is cheaper than Dryden almost.

John is going on very well. Yet I shall be anxious for your return—pray let me hear from you on affairs in general—I am now anxious to know how Dryden will strike the public taste.² Dont omit to pick up all the 4to. volumes of plays you can find. I have various projects about them—also all marvellous tales. Believe me Yours truly

W SCOTT

CASTLE STREET 11th April 1808

Mr. James Ballantyne Care of Mr. Miller Bookseller
Albemarle Street London

[*Signet Library*]

To JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR—I never allow any person to forget a promise in my favour especially one of my high and mighty allies of the Trade. Do you remember you was so good as to say you would get me a copy of the *cancelled* print to Hopners³ tales. I think the anecdote so diverting

¹ In a letter of 8th April: "Ballantyne coming to town I can regulate with him about the printing—and no bad job will it be to him," and, referring to the lines on Fox in *Marmion*: "No one but a fool or an ass would be guilty of the thing the M Chro [*Morning Chronicle*] had imputed to you—but party, party, party . . . Mrs. Miller has just given me a second baby but I hope Dryden and Fox [*History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II*] will pay the extra expence."—*Walpole Collection*.

² James writes from London on 30th April: "Miller has sold in one day £2000 worth of Dryden, besides £1500 in country orders. The book is not yet publishing so I cannot tell what the worldly will think about it, but those who have seen the Life . . . are delighted with it. They especially admire the style which they say possesses these qualities of strength, clearness and simplicity which are peculiarly adapted to longevity. In a few days I shall be able to tell you more."—*Walpole Collection*.

³ *Oriental Tales*, translated into English verse by J[ohn] H[oppner], London, 1805, 2nd Ed. 1806.

that I beg if you can conveniently do so you would oblige me by sending it in your next parcel to Constable and tell me at the same time what Campbell is about. I have heard nothing of him since I left town. If the Magazine goes on you will send it me and I will do what I can for it here. I should be glad to see you if you come to Scotland and am Your obedt. Servt.

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 16 *April* [1808]

[*Sir A. J. Law*]

To JAMES BALLANTYNE

ASHESTIEL 22*d April* [1808]

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—I begin to be impatient to hear from you concerning your success in London. But this letter principally respects your friend & mine Mrs. Siddons. I wrote her a long letter from Arnistoun & at the Chief Barons request on the subject of the Edinburgh Theatre¹ to which I have been anxiously expecting a reply & fear my cause has already sufferd by delay."

¹ Throughout the year 1808 the question of the new patent for the Edinburgh theatre was a subject of frequent correspondence between Scott, Erskine, Robert Dundas, Lord Dartmouth and others. The first licensed theatre in Edinburgh dates from 1788, when a patent was granted to the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Melville, then the Right Honble. Henry Dundas. This was due to expire on 21st September 1809, and those anxious to secure a better class of entertainment were trying to secure a new patent in the names of the Duke of Buccleuch, the Provost, the Dean of the Faculty, Lord P. Murray, Mr. John Hay, Mr. Mackenzie (the Man of Feeling), Mr. Home, Walter Scott and William Erskine. Opposition, not to the new patent but to the chance of their putting in a new lessee, came from the Jacksons, who held the management at the time, and Mr. Rock represented their interest. In the end the patent was granted, but on the condition that the Jacksons should have fair compensation. What profit Scott was to get from this I do not know, but in a letter of 7th July the Chief Baron begs his brother, Lord Melville, to see Lord Dartmouth (the Chancellor) and "state the private reasons for this being of importance to poor Scott and his family. These I presume you know. He acts as Clerk gratis during George Home's life and from attachment to his brother involved himself as security for him to a considerable extent."—*Melville Papers*, National Library.

The letter was addressd Covent-Garden Theatre ; pray enquire its fate. The substance (for you may be safely trusted with all that concerns Mrs. Siddons) was that the patent of the Edr. theatre which expires this year was to be vested in a set of gentlemen for the public advantage. Rock is moving heaven & earth with the Town Council & others to get a lease & I found the Provost at Arnistoun come on purpose to solicit the Chief Baron with a positive assurance on Rocks part that Mrs. S. had not the most distant thoughts of the matter. I beggd leave to doubt this assertion extremely and accordingly the C.B. commissiond me to write to Mrs. S. with the assurance that if she had any view for herself or Mr H. Siddons he would do all in his power to forward it. I think I can also answer for Dalkeith House being favourable if spoke to in time. All that I wish is that Mrs. Siddons would let me know whether she has any thoughts of the management or not. In the former event she need bind herself to nothing till we see what sort of terms can be offerd. But by simply stating her wishes she will enable me to put an effectual stop to the present system of intrigue and cabal which may otherwise foreclose their being complied with. And if (which I should think a great disappointment) Mrs. S. has no thought on the subject Mr. Henry Mackenzie & I think of looking out for some other candidate. Our friend Young would do well if joind by any person of capital. One thing you will understand better than I can express namely how completely Mrs. Siddons' plan may be foild if it shall appear to come through the hands of a certain bustling political party For with however little reason, you know as well as I, that the Magistrates would take the alarm as if the theatre was to be thrown into the hands of these persons—it would be asking a favour of De Monfort in the name of Rezenvelt. I fear [Miss] D's active kindness in this matter & if possible would have Mrs. Siddons stand upon her own high ground without

the most distant shadow of party bustle. I hinted this in my letter to Mrs. S. which I shewd the Chief before sealing it & I am most anxious to hear her determination. It is the last calling of the *Bans*. The instant those are spoke to who must be secured I will take it upon me to mention the matter to Miss Dallas but sooner I think it could do no good & might be of prejudice. I believe Mr. Mackenzies name & perhaps Wm. Erskines & mine will be in the patent. Will you get to the bottom of this business & write to me about it.

I left John very busy but only 10 presses mand ; for want of pressmen—meanwhile the Compositors were likely to desert because the presses were over-burdend. Surely we suffer by want of hands. Beneath I write an order on Messrs. Longman & company to settle with you a few pounds which they owe me. I owe Messrs. Wood & Green Newsmen No 9 Holywell Street Strand the sum of £4, 7, for the Courier newspaper on my account. I will write to them to send the receipt to Mr. Millars, who can pay it & settle with you. We are here up to the knees in snow. No other news stirring except that Jeffrey has written a very sharp review of Marmion in which however he gives Canto VI most extravagant praise. Do you know who writes “The Crusaders or Minstrels of Acre” lately publishd by Cadell & Davies¹—It has some spirited Stanzas and is much above the every day tone of poetry—Will you be so good as to write as soon as you can & let me know how Dryden is selling etc etc. Direct to Ashestiel Selkirk N.B. as I shall be here for a fortnight at least. Believe me Yours truly

Mr. James Ballantyne

WALTER SCOTT

Care of Mr. Miller Bookseller

Albemarle Street London

[*Signet Library*]

¹ *The Crusaders, or Minstrels of Acre, a Poem*, 4to, London, 1808, is in the Abbotsford Library. The author has not been discovered so far as I can find.

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TO MISS SEWARD

CATHEDRAL CLOSE, LICHFIELD [23rd April 1808]

MY DEAR MISS SEWARD,—It is long since I have been honoured with your kind letter containing so favourable and partial an analysis of *Marmion*. It is now lying before me and the contents are enough to warm the blood to the finger ends although our coals are all expended, the snow lying two feet deep and the roads impassable while the almanack impudently pretends to my very face that to-day is the twenty-third of April. We expect a visit from Miss White in the course of next week ; certainly if the weather permits her to accomplish her journey at all, she will deem herself in Siberia or Nova Zembla. I submit to most of your strictures¹ those excepted where we differ on *principle*—a word which I respect however

¹ Miss Seward had written on 15th March congratulating Scott “on the splendid result of your rapid labours, which indeed are above rule and art but lovely as an April day when the resplendent sun breaks out perpetually through the scattered clouds which shroud him at intervals.” She has written on the enchanting theme to Constable and to Miss White. She then proceeds to dilate on special beauties as the trial and death of Clare : “but how was it that you used the word *butchery*?—starvation was their doom, not the knife.” Passing on she comes to “a local picture which Poetry has never excelled, and which Painting never has equalled—the first view of Edinburgh “thine own romantic town.” “In a Poem of mine published in the 5th volume of the *Poetical Register* . . . there is a stanza which this apostrophe to Edinburgh recalls . . .” and of which she is tempted to insert a verse :

I trod with awe the scene sublime
Those wrecks august which ruthless Time
On seven proud hills hath strown ;
Where Rome, her radiant skies beneath,
Sits with the solemn air of Death
Upon her ruin'd throne.

The detailed eulogy then proceeds, giving Scott a pretty full analysis of his own poem but she admits that there are “prosaic parts that you might have polished to great advantage . . . at least weeded of their too abundant expletives.” She has read Mr. Coplestone’s satire on Jeffrey’s style in criticism. She has spoken in her letter to Miss White of Southey’s visit to her and the impression he left on her mind. She knows, of course, that Lydia Whyte is visiting Scott and will communicate the contents of her letter.

as much when I think it really ranks against me as when it combats on my side : and I hope withal I have equal spirit to contemn the assistance of party partiality and the enmity of party prejudice when they assume its respectable disguise and enlist themselves in either party. The word *butchery* has been noted by several of my friends as well as by you so I think it must be wrong—Yet to me the dragging of a victim to death sounds butchery as well as the actual use of the knife or mallet. I am not familiar with the Poetical Register. I see I must get [it] to make myself acquainted with such beautiful verses as those you quote from the fifth volume. They are uncommonly striking. I wrote you a pretty long letter on the subject of collecting and publishing a few of your original poems on which I will not now [say anything] further than to express my sincere hope that in some shape or other you will gratify us so far.

My reason for transporting *Marmion* from Lichfield was to make good the minstrel prophecy of Constance's song. Why I should ever have taken him there I cannot very well say. Attachment to the place, its locality with respect to Tamworth, the ancient seat of the Marmions, partly perhaps the whim of taking a slap at Lord Brooke *en passant*, joined in suggesting the idea which I had not time to bring out or finish as the concluding canto of *Marmion* was written in four days and sent piece-meal to the press as the ink dried on the paper without copying or revisal. I plead guilty of trifling with my theme in concluding, but in God's name what could I do—all interest died with *Marmion* but my subordinate characters remained on my hand to be "wooded and married and a'" as our old song says. I should have been torn to pieces if I had not given some account of them but to make it interesting was impossible. I therefore treated them as the author in the Critic treats the confidante of Tilburina¹

¹ Sheridan's *Critic*, II. 2 :

Puff. 'Sdeath and fury ! — Gad's life ! — sir ! madam ! if you go

—een took them by the shoulders and pushed them off the stage the best way I could.

I am quite glad you have seen Southey. Delighted with him you must be, yet in conversation (great as he is) he is inferior to Wordsworth, perhaps because he is a deeper and more elaborate scholar. Southey rarely allows you any of those reposes of conversation when you are at liberty to speak, as the phrase is, "whatever comes uppermost." But in return, if an idle fellow like me is sometimes a little *géné*, he is at least informed, and may be the wiser or better for all he hears. What I admire in both is an upright undeviating morality connecting itself with all they think and say and write. Southey is now I believe in London studying for the Cid, and the Portuguese History. I am impatient for both.

Nothing new of the literary kind amongst us except that Jeffrey has written a very sharp review of *Marmion* for the next Edinburgh Review. Being an utter stranger to the pangs of an Author's anxiety, and not very susceptible of pleasure arising from poetical reputation it would be very hard if I were subjected to the distress arising from wretched feelings on critical attacks. We dined together and went over the subject of his criticism with mutual good humour. I cannot say I am sorry for the circumstance as I firmly believe if ever I write again I shall do better without one half of my popularity (I suppose I must call it) and furthermore, it will exhibit the impartiality of the critic which has been considerably assailed—

Mrs. Jackson¹ leaves Edinburgh in a short time to be Governess to Mr. Arbuthnot's¹ children (late our Resident

out without the parting look, you might as well dance out—Here, here!

Confidante. But pray, sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you get off! edge away at the top, or where you will (*pushes the confidante off*).

¹ Mrs. John Jackson, author of *Dialogues on the Doctrine and Duties of Christianity for the Instruction of the Young* (1806), is one of Miss Seward's

at Constantinople). I hope it will answer but I fear she will find the task of teaching "the young idea how to shoot" one fully more laborious than that of planting cabbages. Her sons are prospering in the West Indies—that is a better hope—they owe her I have been told, much. I hope they will have both the means and the desire to repay her amply. The said Mrs. Jackson wrote me a letter just as I left Edinburgh, about a Mr. Whalley who is, God bless the mark, ambitious of becoming LL.D. and can find no better road to it than through a Scotch University. I believe Edinburgh and Glasgow have long declined dealing in this sort of literary Simony, though St. Andrews and Aberdeen still as Johnson said *get rich by degrees*. But as Mr. Whalley is stated to be a friend of yours I will endeavour to assist him if he comes here to *be-doctored*, though I think his ambition an odd one. I hold your letter too valuable to be employed as a talisman in conjuring up the benevolence of any periodical critic from Dan to Beersheba. Mr. Fellows¹ will I dare say write what he likes about *Marmion*, but let him write what he will "these things grieve not Cecil." My connection with my poem drops as compleatly with its publication as that of the bird with her nestlings when she has turned them off—But no man values the applause of his friends more highly, and particularly Miss Seward's, than her very faithful

W. S.

Mrs. Scott joins in compliments and kindness as warm as weather will permit. She has been just alarmed with a mad dog or one so called shot under the window.

[*British Museum*]

regular correspondents; and Mr. and Mrs. Whalley appear among them as early as 1798. Mr. Arbuthnot is the Charles Arbuthnot who had come to Scott's aid in the affair of the Clerk to the Commission on Scottish Judicature, of which we have heard.

¹ The Reverend R. Fellowes, B.A. (Oxon.), author of *A Picture of Christian Philosophy* (1799), was also one of Miss Seward's correspondents.

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SURTEES,—I have been a little way out of town, and only yesterday received your kind letter. Upon maturely considering your obliging offer, I have determined to be contented with copies of the Bishop's two letters, which you are kind enough to offer me. There would be no end of publishing every thing relative to the period, nor is it perhaps desirable, where so much depends on minute accuracy, that state papers should be printed where the proof-sheets cannot be collated with the originals before their being thrown off. I do grudge a little the necessity of relinquishing the more complete illustrations which might be derived from the Lansdowne papers ; but, I believe, I must e'en confine myself to my own materials. Among the Cotton MSS. are four letters respecting Sir Ralph Sadler's earlier life. They occur upon pages, 343, 370, 375, 378 ; and No. 102, 118, 121, 112, on the respective pages of the Catalogue. (By the way, is there not a new Catalogue ?) May I give you the trouble of looking into them to see what they contain, and whether they throw any light on the rise of his fortunes. There is also on page 344, No. 161, a letter from Sir Ralph, about some commotions in the Northern counties : this, I presume, may be interesting, at least to you and me. You see how I presume on your goodness ; but as you have taught me how to beg, you will not, I hope, teach me how a beggar should be answered. My own motions townward are absolutely uncertain. I would have been there before now ; but as I have a prospect of being called up on business, I rather chose to postpone my journey till it became necessary than to run the risk of having my stay protracted beyond what would be pleasant or convenient. At any rate, I hope to see you either in town, or by the road. When you write to John Marriot, will you say, with my kind compliments, that a copy of Sir Marmion intended for him is at

Murray's, the bookseller, in Fleet-street, not being enough of a knight errant to venture into the wilds of Cornwall without a direction. The truth is, I should have written to him long ago, but an event deeply afflicting to him, and the thoughts of which still make me sick—I mean the loss of his former pupil, Lord Scott—took from me all heart to write to him. I am truly happy to hear of his giving so effectual proof of convalescence as to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony, and should like much to know where he is to establish himself and all about it.

I am very glad you like Marmion, it has need of some friends ; for Jeffery shewed me yesterday a very sharp review of it ; I think as tight a one as he has written since Southey's Madoc. As I don't believe the world ever furnished a critic and an author who were more absolute *poco curantés* about their craft, we dined together, and had a hearty laugh at the revisal of the flagellation. Ever yours, &c.

EDINBURGH, April, 1808.

[*Abbotsford Copies and Surtees Memoir*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,—I do not delay to write to thank you for the transcripts received to-day in your own excellent & most distinct hand. I am quite ashamed of the trouble you have had. In requital *annuntio vobis gaudium magnum*. The old pedigree¹ was quite right ; and Norton the father

¹ Norton is the aged father of Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone*, who with seven of his sons was executed. Scott has discovered that, as a fact, the father escaped abroad. Scott wrote to Wordsworth on the subject, for in a letter of 14th May (*Partington*, pp. 65-6) Wordsworth writes : " Thank you for the interesting particulars about the Nortons ; I shall like much to see them for their own sakes ; but so far from being serviceable to my Poem they would stand in the way of it, as I have followed (as I was in duty bound to do) the traditionary and common historic records. Therefore I shall say in this case, a plague upon your industrious Antiquarianism that has put my fine story to confusion." *The White Doe* had appeared in 1807.

certainly escaped abroad, in spite of all ballads and traditions whatever. Here is the proof :—In the eighth volume of the Harleian Miscellany you will find, about page 584, a letter to a friend concerning Doctor Story, the famous persecutor, who was taken and executed in Queen Elizabeth's time ; in which the said Story is said to have confessed that, in 1570, he held many conferences and much intercourse with the English exiles in Flanders, amongst whom old Norton is distinctly and repeatedly mentioned. It is needless to say that this evidence is decisive, whether Story made any such confession or not ; because if Norton had been hanged at York the year before, it would have been absurd in a partizan of Queen Elizabeth to represent Story as conversing and corresponding with him in Flanders in 1570. So that's a difficulty solved. I like the crazy old Bishop's *nolo episcopari* on the subject of his York preferment. As for Lady Margaret Gray, I would fain hope that her spiritual backslidings have been made the foundation of charging her with carnal inaccuracies. The fury of the times against the Papists amounted to persecution, especially when they fell into fanatical hands. There is a good deal in Lodge's Illustrations about the proceedings against a Lady Constance Foljambe in Derbyshire, whom her own grandson apprehended (by the assistance of God ! as he said), and despoiled grievously.

About Marmion, I can safely say, though it sounds very like affectation, that my anxiety was past, after it received in a considerable degree the suffrages of a few of my friends. I hardly know how or why it is, but I really lose all concern for my labours after they get before the public ; and the fate of those that sunk and those that swam, and I have had a good many of both, made an equally indifferent impression upon their unfeeling parent. As to the special objections you mention, they fall within my plan, which has always been rather to exhibit ancient costume, diction, and manners, than to display my own

ingenuity in making an ideal world, or in dealing in general description, which may be as correct among the Iroquois as when the scene is laid in feudal Europe. No doubt this may easily be carried too far, and one may be induced to dwell on minute particulars, because they are ancient, which would not be worth mentioning were the costumes modern. But as the Venetian General told his soldiers, when fighting against the Pope, that they were Venetians before they were Christians ; even so I, having been an antiquary many years before I thought of being a poet, may be permitted to sacrifice to my original studies, while pursuing those of later date. Adieu, my good friend, and believe I will think myself happy if an opportunity should ever occur to me of repaying in part your manifold kindnesses. I intend to write to Marriot, and will address the letter to your care, not knowing his proper direction.

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 26th April, 1808.

[*Abbotsford Copies and Surtees Memoir*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE ¹

[April 1808]

DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I quite forgot yesterday to mention to you what Constable said about Mr. Struthers poem.² He thinks the price should not be below 5

¹ Joanna Baillie, dramatist and poet, was born at the manse of Bothwell, Lanarkshire, on 11th September 1762. Her volume of *Plays on the Passions* (1798) brought her an acquaintance with Scott. Their friendship lasted for more than half a century. In 1810 appeared *The Family Legend*, for the production of which, at the Edinburgh Theatre, Scott wrote a prologue. "It was during the same visit to London [spring 1806] that Scott first saw Joanna Baillie." She first visited Scott in Edinburgh in March 1808. She died on 23rd February 1851.

² John Struthers (1776-1853), a cowherd and shoemaker, was one of the many poets in low life who, as Scott says, were called forth by the example of Burns : "The success of Burns had the effect of exciting general emulation among all his class in Scotland who were able to tag a rhyme. . . . Poets began to chirp in every corner like grasshoppers in a sunshine day. The steep rocks poured down poetical goatherds, and the bowels of the

Shillings printed by Ballantyne and if a subscription goes forward he will take 250 copies at Booksellers price which will be about 2/10. If 250 more can be disposed of to the Booksellers it will discharge all the expence of printing and paper, so that the Subscription money when recoverd will go all into the Authors pocket, deducing a trifle for boarding &c. If however Mr. Struthers would prefer a sum certain Mr. Constable will give him £30 „ for an edition of 1000 copies. The deuce is that it is much more easy to get names to a subscription paper than to get the money afterwards and I think in general not less than 20 or 25 per cent is lost. I should therefore incline to believe that if in addition to the £30 „ Constable will allow Mr. S. to dispose of 30 or 40 copies for his own benefit which might be easily disposed of at 7/ a piece, your protégé will make more money with less trouble than even by a large subscription. Besides it is to be considered that it will in the latter case be the interest of the Bookseller to push the work off and that a new edition will have the better chance to be calld for. You will be so good as consider which of these modes you think will do best. Constable seems to think it absolutely necessary it should be printed by Ballantyne as he very knowingly says that a small lady-looking book must always be done in the best stile. I think I could get off ten or twelve copies and be answerable for the money but though I could get many more names I would not like to be responsible for people whom I could not *dūn* [*sic*].

Finding Erskine is still out of Town I send you the *scroll* copy of the Tragedy of Tragedies, if any part of it be totally illegible it will be no great loss but I regret it should cost you more trouble than could be helped. In your judgement pray remember mercy especially since

earth vomited rhyming colliers.” A cowherd and shoemaker, he abandoned his calling for literature and produced *Anticipation*, 1803; *The Poor Man's Sabbath*, 1804, and others later. The proposal in hand was a collected edition, *The Poor Man's Sabbath, with other poems*. Third edition, 1808.

the case is that of your sincere admirer and most respectful
and much obliged

W SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Saturday*—¹

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

26th April [1808]

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—I cannot you see permit your conscience to be long at ease without putting you anew into my debt for though I think I would hardly even to your Ladyship yield the palm of being the laziest correspondent on earth yet the chance of being forgotten by our friends is still more intolerable than the chance of annoying them by too frequently refreshing their memory. If a wish could transport me to the Priory I should not be long in paying my personal respects—Your heavenly weather makes me envy you could I envy any advantage that is so well bestowed. We are here among hills white with snow and rivers red with rain, the atmosphere being an *ambigu* between the one and the other, the land looking like Nova Zembla though I am not conscious of having left Scotland and the climate feeling like Christmas though the Almanack maintains to my very face that it is the 26th of April. Very sad all this—and what is worse the groom says he cannot get forage for the horses, and the dairy maid protests that there is no food for the cows and the lambs are dying by scores as fast as they are yeaned,—and the pigs—and the poultry—and the dogs—and lastly the children are are [*sic*] all in some danger of being actually starved. Seriously I believe that if the weather

¹ This letter, dated by some hand on the original 1812, belongs to 1808, for Joanna Baillie's criticism of Scott's *House of Aspen*, dated 4th April 1808, is printed in *Familiar Letters*, i. pp. 105-7, and the original is in the Walpole collection. Immediately following it there is another about Struthers reporting his acceptance of Constable's proposal.

does not mend speedily we shall have a terrible year in our South Highlands and still worse in the North.

To call up a less lamentable subject—I hope your Ladyship has received an odd sort of copy of the *Life of Dryden* printed in quarto. It was entrusted to the care of Ballantyne the great Edinburgh printer who is now in London. If it has not reached your hands if your Ladyship will cause any one send a note to Miller the Bookseller he will see what Ballantyne has made of it. I desired it should be sent to St. James Square.

I have looked out in vain for a copy of the *Elgin Epistles*. There was no occasion for printing them here nor do I think any got abroad except what [*some words omitted here*]. Truly it is a pity such edifying communications of love & devotion should be lost to the public. I believe they rival any productions of the kind (Ld. Blandford's [?] not excepted) since the days of the D. of Gloucester who wrote *Billets Doux* “without anyone by [?] him except himself alone at sea.” Yet Robert Fergusson was held a young man of some promise untill this terrible fit of Love turned his brain with the seamy side outwards. He was always to be sure a sort of Celadon for I remember his almost dying for Miss Berry many years ago. You fair ladies have much to answer for the ravages you make in our upper stories.

My motions southwards depend entirely on the Scotch Judicature Bill. If I am to be Clerk to the Commissioners named under that Act of Parliament. I rather think [their] meeting must take place in London for the first arrangements at least in which case I must attend them there. I am much obliged as I have always been to Lord Melville for his kind exertions on my behalf.

The Whiggs here and in London are furious and yet I think with very little reason. If I did not rather dislike satire from principle than feel myself altogether disqualified from it by nature I have the means of very severe retaliation in my power particularly with respect to

Holland house which has busied itself much more in my matters than I approve of. Is it not astonishing that people will begin to throw stones with so many glass windows in their own heads? Nobody cares what these great folks can say of me but should I take the humour of returning their abuse I suspect I would find auditors enough.

Sotheby told me he wrote his last poem¹ to discharge his conscience of a religious duty and without any reference to temporal popularity. I am concerned to observe from your Ladyship's letter that he is again suffering worldly ambition to creep in upon him. I am much flattered with Lawrence's approbation of *Marmion*—he is truly a man of genius, his own art cannot be practised without constant exercise of the imagination and therefore his vote is worth that of hundreds.

Have you heard by the bye that little Mrs. Riddell² of Hampton Court (Burns's Mrs. Riddell) has married a young officer of Dragoons. My friend Mathias (the author of the pursuits of literature) will in all probability break his heart upon this melancholy occasion. I am obliged to break off abruptly for I see the carriage of a crazy Welsh woman of our acquaintance who is come (Lord help *hur*) to see our romantic scenery when it is ancle deep in snow—Have you ever seen *hur*? She is a certain Miss Lydia White, nineteen times dyed blue, lively and clever and absurd to the uttermost degree but exceedingly good-natured. I think I must let her run some risque in fording the Tweed that we may show to more advantage from her joy at finding herself on dry

¹ *Saul*: a poem in two parts. London, 1807.

² Mrs. Riddell, that is Mrs. Walter R. (Maria Banks Woodley), the friend of Burns. For the history of that friendship, their quarrel and reconciliation, see the *Life of Burns*. She survived her second marriage to Phillips Lloyd Fletcher, a Welsh landowner, in 1807, only a few months, dying 15th December 1808. Of her friendship with Mathias I know nothing. She met Scott in the spring of that year in London and later sent him some of Burns's election songs. Miss Lydia White was arriving with an introduction from Miss Seward.

land. But as this joke must not be carried too far Good-bye, my dear friend.

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,—I do not delay acknowledging your kind letter, and begging you will give yourself no further trouble on my account than you mean to take on your own concerning Sadler's letter from Darlington. I would not publish it entire, and should only be glad to glean from it any particulars which might serve to throw light on Sadler's situation & private history. If you will trust me with the perusal of your own memorandum, I will return it safe, and save you the trouble of obtaining or making a transcript. My motions are still very undetermined : whether I shall remain at Edinburgh during the next summer session, or move southwards, I am very uncertain.

The letter from Sir Ralph's father argues that he was a man of inferior rank ; probably only a steward or auditor to the proprietor of Cilney, whom I trust to discover when I go to Edinburgh. I think it would seem he expected his wife to return by the Great Hadham carts or waggons.

I have been favoured with a letter from Mr. Lowes,¹

¹ See Surtees' reply to this letter (23rd May) in which he explains that Scott may have been misled by his letter accompanying the ballad. "At the same time I cannot think you have grievously offended the manes of Mr. Lowes's ancestry by bestowing Ridley Hall on the ancient Ridleys—certain I am that the Ridleys of Willimondswick were also possessors of Ridley down to a late period." "The name of Lowes is, I believe, local, from Lowes Forest but, however ancient it may be, I cannot find that they were the possessors of Ridley Hall at any very remote period." "At the time to which your ballad refers it was certainly held by the Ridleys." "By the by, when you reprint *Marmion*, say the ballad was given me by an agent &c. not *the* agent ; as that would imply Colonel Beaumont's chief agent, of whose name even I am ignorant, and who probably knows nothing of the matter." It is not likely he did since the ballad was a fake of Surtees.

of Ridley Hall, stating that it is a different place from Willimoteswick, which is situated two miles higher up the river, was embattled, and still exhibits an oblong tower in tolerable preservation. What is more afflicting, by confounding these two mansions, I have conferred, according to Mr. Lowes, Ridley Hall, the immemorial possession of his ancestors, upon the Riddleys of Willimoteswick. I don't know how all this gear cottons with the matter of fact, but you will of course be able to tell me exactly. I think Wallis or Camden led me into the blunder ; yet, as I had your letter on the subject before my nose, I hardly know how I could make so gross an error. Believe me, my dear Sir, Ever yours truly,

ASHESTIEL, 2nd May, [1808].

WALTER SCOTT

Written in haste, as appeareth.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,—I was favoured two days ago with the account of your proposed day of weighing anchor & suppose this will find you at moorings in London. I have no commissions to trouble you with except of & concerning the Swift. A set of Cibbers lives would be very desirable—also a Granger¹—also any original editions you may be able to pick up. I have heard something of collections for a Life of Swift in Dublin but I own I do not fear an Irish editor. It was also intimated to me that some of these materials might perchance be purchased but unless they were of more consequence than I apprehend them to be this wd. not be worth while. Miller

¹ Probably *The lives of the poets of Great Britain and Ireland to the time of Dean Swift*, 5 vols., London, 1753. Granger is the Reverend James Granger's *Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*, published by Tom Davies on 17th May, 1769. A few copies were printed on one side to admit the insertion of engravings. Hence the word "grangerize." The copy in the Edinburgh University Library has a supplement and "a list of portraits of eminent persons communicated by H. Walpole," 1769-74. A fifth edition with further lives appeared in 1824.

declined to buy Wartons notes on Dryden in the same circumstances which were probably more valuable.

I wrote to Mr. Smythe¹ of Cambridge under cover to Mr. Weber which I suppose he would find at the post Office there. But I doubt greatly the professor himself may have been absent. I presume that if you found that from this or any other circumstance his access to the Library was impeded you would bring him on to London where the Museum is an unfailing resource.

I will not tax your civility with writing to me from London knowing how busy you must needs be. But I expect much literary news [on] your return. The Fox for example must be started while you are in London. You will also learn how the Dryden about which Miller is so anxious is likely to repay him.²

If you can pick me up any 4to. plays at a reasonable rate I should be glad to have them—not however at connoisseur prices. I am glad the new *Marmion* is at length out. Ever yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 3d. May. 1808

Miss Whyte & her niece are here with us an[d] enjoying delightful weather. I have made them expect moss troopers.

Mr. Archibald Constable

Care of Mr. Murray, 33 Fleet Street London

[*Stevenson*]

¹ William Smyth (1765-1849), after suffering various indignities as tutor to Richard Brinsley Sheridan's son, accompanied his pupil to Cambridge (1803) and in 1806 became tutor of Peterhouse, and in 1807 regius professor of modern history. There are many letters of his to Scott in the Walpole collection, but I have found none of Scott's. They began through a common interest in Robert Jamieson.

² "This was the bold speculation of William Miller of Albemarle Street, London; and the editor's fee, at forty guineas the volume, was £756. . . . It was, however, better received than any one, except perhaps the courageous bookseller himself, had anticipated. The entire work was reprinted in 1821."—LOCKHART. The new *Marmion* is the second edition of 3000 copies which followed the first of 2000 in less than a month: at least so Lockhart, though the letter suggests a longer interval.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—Your letter found me in this quiet corner and while it always gives me pride and pleasure to hear from you I am truly concerned at Constable's unaccountable [delays]. I suppose that in the hurry of his departure for London, his promise to write to Mr. Struthers had escaped ; as for any desire to quit his bargain it is quite out of the question. If Mr. Struthers will send to my house in Castle Street the copy of his Book and the Manuscripts designed for the press I will get him a short bill for the copy money the moment Constable returns or perhaps before he comes down. He may rely on the bargain being definitively settled and the printing will I suppose be begun immediately on the Great Biblioplist's return on which occasion I shall have according to good old phrase "a crow to pluck with him and a pock to put the feathers in."

I heartily wish we could have had the honour to see Miss Baillie and you at our little farm which is now in its glory, all the twiggs bursting into leaf and all the lambs skipping on the hills. I have been fishing almost from morning till night, and Mrs. Scott and two ladies our guests are wandering about on the banks in the most Arcadian fashion in the world. We are just on the point of setting out on a pilgrimage to the "bonny bush aboon Traquair," which I believe will occupy us all the morning. Adieu my dear Miss Baillie nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear that you have found the northern breezes fraught with inspiration. You are not entitled to spare yourself and none is so deeply interested in your labours as your truly respectful friend and Admirer

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE

WALTER SCOTT

7th May 1808

P.S.—We quit our quiet pastures to return to [Edin.] on the 10th. So Mr. Struthers' parcel will find me there if he is pleased to intrust me with the care of it. Mrs.

Scott joins in kindest compliments to Miss Baillie. Happy shall we think ourselves when we can see you again.

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have looked out the old Ballads. One I think very pretty

There lived a wife in the Wilds of Kent.

I have seen a copy or rather another version of the same *riddle me ree* beginning

The Elphin Knight sate on a hill
Ba, ba, lile ba.

The tale of the Doune Shepherdess is curious & I believe true. The tale of (Piren) Reed I intend for the Border Minstrelsy, but if you like to print it in the meantime you shall have all the illustrations I can give. It is a tale of Redesdale & still well remembered. Yours ever

WALTER SCOTT

Saturday CASTLE STREET [1808]

I would like to have back the copy of the Wife in the Wilds of Kent as I want Anne to learn a few of the verses : the line is very pretty—Child Horn you will recognise as a version of the old Romance. Please send back the music at your own good time.

A thousand thanks for Dame Tweedale.

Charles Sharp Esq. Princes Street.

[*Rosebery*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have a ballad or two for you—will you dine here on Wednesday at 6 o'clock to meet Chauntry the celebrated sculptor, who is a real good cut of John Bull. Yours ever

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Sunday* 15 May [1808]

[*Rosebery*]

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

[1808]

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I was honoured with your letter and will carefully attend to your instructions respecting Schetky's prints. I cannot learn that they are yet finishd although it is long since he wrote to me that they would be out of the engravers hands in a fortnight. But printers & engravers are a very perfidious set of persons. I do not believe that the printed descriptions of the views to which I added a few border anecdotes are yet quite printed off—

Mr. Scott cheated us of a visit the last time he was in town and as we afterwards learnd had by just retribution almost been cheated of his dinner at Newbottle—

I have been just dismissing to press a new edition of *Marmion* which the booksellers say is wanted instantly so the Review has not spoiled the sale. Indeed Jeffery's flagellation is of a kind not calculated to do much harm and has much more the appearance than the essence of severity. The specimens are carefully selected from the best passages of the poem and the criticisms on the plan are so general that they involve the credit of Ariosto and Tasso as much as mine. I can have no objection to be tried on such an issue—I suspect Jeffery made an odd sort of compounding between his own character & mine on the occasion and was willing rather to amuse the public with cracking his whip than to annoy the culprit with laying on the lash.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind Compliments to Mr. Scott we hope to see you at Ashestiel in July while the days are long and the hills pleasant. Believe me very truly Dear Madam
Your obliged & respectful humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR: 25 *May* [*no year date*]

[*Polwarth*]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

DEAR CHARLES,—I sent the processes yesterday but foolishly left out a note I had made upon that of *Murray* whose litigations seem to be endless. It was merely directing you to employ neutral persons to survey the houses & report what it would cost to put them in sufficient repair in terms of the Tack.

The Chief Baron has issued a precept from Excheqr. respecting the gold ring found in Carterhaugh now in possession of the worthy Advocate Currie. You will see the propriety of taking his examination yourself about it & making the proper return to Excheqr. I was much surprized to hear it but find it has been lately done in similar cases. Yours truly

EDINR. 25 *May* [1808].

W. SCOTT

I suppose the order would go to Borrowman—
[*Curle*]

TO MRS. HUGHES

MY DEAR MADAM,—I was honoured with your letter some time ago and immediatly wrote to Mr. Atwood to express my thanks for the honour he has done my Lullaby in wedding it to his music.—I have inclosed the notes of the original Gaelic air procured after much enquiry and some difficulty for the character of the Highland music is so wild and irregular that it is I am informed extremely difficult to reduce it to notes. I fear it would puzzle any one except Mrs. Hughes herself to unite the words and music—they do sing however and I hope though I fear after more trouble than either words or tune are worth you will at length be able to find out how. This Ditty should have been sent in search of you long ago but I really thought I must have waited till the Highlanders came down to get in the harvest which they do as the Irish with you come over to the Hay-making. Should

you like the air I will endeavour to find you more Gaelic music, for they have a tune and a song to almost everything that they set about.

Marmion is much flattered by your approbation—he has been very successful with the public 5000 copies being already disposed of. The critics (I mean the professional critics) have not I understand been so favourable as to the *Lay* but with this I laid my account for many causes.

It would give me great pleasure could I hope to see Miss Hayman and you this summer but the chance which there was of this taking place seems daily more uncertain. I believe now that my autumn will be spent in Ettrick forest. I wish you could come there and make our hills vocal with your melody.¹ Mrs. Scott would be delighted to see you & so should I to receive Dr. Hughes at my farm. Make my kindest compliments to him and believe me Dear Madam Your obliged humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 1st June [1808]

I hear with regret that Miss Hayman has been much afflicted by the loss of a relation.

[*Gabriel Wells*]

TO WILLIAM LAIDLAW

DEAR WILLIAM,—Mrs. Scott joins her thanks to mine for the superb pikes : being scientifically stew'd with rich sauce they make a most excellent dish. I am quite astonished at George's dexterity, and as much obliged by his generosity. This accompanies a copy of *Marmion*, which I will see put up with my own eyes. Constable is greatly too busy to be uniformly accurate. I have promised Lord Somerville that he shall hear from you, and I think your plan, being a little talk'd of *as yours* among the English Agriculturalists, may recommend an experiment to my friend Lord Dalkeith. But he would certainly hardly hold me a competent judge upon such a

¹ This becomes "your sweet voice" in Mrs. Hughes's copy of the letter.

subject ; yet I will take the first opportunity to jog his recollection about it. I have only heard from him once since his family loss, and that was upon another topic.

Your father spoke to me in the Parliamt. House about a farm for you near Edinb. I have not learned the success of his scheme, but I heartily wish you were doing something for yourself. Believe me, Yours very truly,

EDIN. 7 June, 1808

W. SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 9th June, 1808

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—I was some time ago honoured with your letter & deeply regret the loss of the lovely little boy whom I saw at Dumfries. I hardly ever saw a prettier cherub-like head & can easily understand what the Marquis was likely to suffer upon so severe an infliction of providence. No one is so sensible as I am of what deficiencies occur in my poetry from the want of judicious criticism and correction, above all from the extreme hurry in which it has hitherto been composed. The worst is that I take the pet at the things myself after they are finished and I fear I shall never be able to muster up the courage necessary to revise *Marmion* as he should be revised. But if I ever write another poem, I am determined to make every single couplet of it as perfect as my uttermost care and attention can possibly effect. In order to ensure the accomplishment of these good resolutions I will consider the whole story in humble prose, and endeavour to make it as interesting as I can before I begin to write it out in verse and thus I shall have at least the satisfaction to know where I am going my narrative having been hitherto much upon the plan of *blind man's buff*. 2ndly Having made my story, I will write my poem with all deliberation and when finished lay it aside for a year at least, during which *quarantine* I

would be most happy if it were suffered to remain in your escritoire or in that of the Marquis who has the best ear for English versification of any person whom in a pretty extensive acquaintance with literary characters I have ever had the fortune to meet with nor is his taste at all inferior to his power of appreciating the harmony of verse.¹ In this way I hope I shall be able to gain the great advantage of his Lordship's revision and consideration provided he should find it in any respect worthy his attention. You see what good resolutions I am forming whether they will be better kept than good resolutions usually are time which brings all things to light will shew your Ladyship.

As for her Grace of Gordon² she is certainly the most ungracious of Graces if she says I read over *Marmion* to her. The only time she saw *Marmion* (excepting however the first Introduction, which your Ladyship remembers was printed separately) was at the Priory when I read some part of it one evening and whether the Duchess was then so good as to point out any of its numerous errors I really cannot recollect. I certainly neither had her Grace's particular amusement nor the least intention of consulting her critically, in my head at the time. Our real quarrel is some supposed neglect in my not attending her parties last winter in Edinburgh. I have had a very handsome compliment from the booksellers who published *Marmion*—no less than a hog'shead of excellent Claret, which is equally flattering as a pretty sure mark that the book has succeeded with [the] public and agreeable to a poor bard whose cellars are not quite so well replenished with wine as his head with whimsies. I am endeavouring

¹ For Scott's posthumous estimate of the Marquis as a scholar, public speaker, landlord and friend, see *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. (Kemble), p. 182.

² "Your Dss of G[ordon] is no friend of yours. She abuses yr *Marmion* as much as if she was one of the party against you, but I must insist you never tell from whom you have heard it. She pretends she read it over with you and told you all she thought faults, and after avowing you did her so great a favour I cannot bear her presumption and want of taste."—LADY ABERCORN, 10th May.

to get a copy of the Elgin Letters by my interest with Jeffrey the Reviewer who was the fair Lady's counsel in the case but I doubt greatly being able to succeed in that quarter for since I gave up assisting him in the *Review* when their politics became so warm my credit with him is a little at ebb.

I have been threatening for some days past to go to Dunira¹ for a day or two and pay my respects to the good old statesman. I wish the Marquis and your Ladyship would come down this summer—I should delight to go a little way into the Highlands with you as I am certain you would be enchanted.

I am truly glad you like the Dryden—I would have sent your Ladyship a whole set of the works if I had had a handsome one at my disposal I am still turning my eyes towards Swift—my situation will not permit me to be idle even if my inclination would leave me at rest. I beg my most respectful thanks to the Marquis and I hope your Ladyship will tell him how much I *intend* to profit by his kind admonitions which I account a very great favour among the many various kinds which I have received at his hands. When this Scottish Judicature Bill gets through parliament I shall learn if I am likely to be wanted in London and if so I need not say how soon I will be an Intruder at the Priory.—Believe me with very great respect Ever your Ladyship's truly obliged and very faithful

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

EDINBURGH, 16th June 1808

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—Nothing will give us more pleasure than to have the honour of showing every

¹ The country house of Lord Melville, near Crieff.

attention in our power to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt,¹ and I am particularly happy in a circumstance that at once promises me a great deal of pleasure in the acquaintance of your Ladyship's friends, and affords me the satisfaction of hearing from you again. If Mr. and Mrs. Morritt should make a long delay in Yorkshire, perhaps we may be at my little farm of Ashestiel, where we have plenty of pigeon-holes to put such friends into as can be contented with goat's whey, narrow quarters, and Selkirkshire mutton. But we shall remain at Edinburgh till the 12th July, when the Courts of Law rise and set their subjects at liberty. Pray don't triumph over me too much in the case of Lydia.² I stood a very respectable siege; but she caressed my wife, coaxed my children, and made, by dint of cake and pudding, some impression even upon the affections of my favourite dog:—so, when all the outworks were carried, the main fortress had no choice but to surrender on honourable terms. To the best of my thinking, notwithstanding the cerulean hue of her stockings, and a most plentiful stock of eccentric affectation, she is really at bottom a good-natured woman, with much liveliness and some talent. She is now set out to the Highlands, where she is likely to encounter many adventures. Mrs Scott and I went as far as Loch Catrine with her, from which jaunt I have just returned.

¹ Lady Louisa Stuart had written from Gloucester Place, London, on the 11th June to introduce the Morritts, to whom she has given a letter of formal introduction. "Mrs. Morritt is of Lord Derby's family, sister to Colonel Stanley member for Lancashire and to a Mr. Stanley master in Chancery whose eldest son just fledged is to accompany them in their northern travels. . . . I find you are going to be the editor of Swift and Thomson. Lydia White wrote an old friend of mine word of the former, by which I presume she has succeeded in making you swear eternal friendship with her notwithstanding your sarcasms on her 'ninety-nine times dyed blue stockings' at first setting out. I always rejoice from an *esprit de corps* when a woman gets the better of a man. But I do not like you editing this and that for the booksellers. It is such a waste of your pen. However, Swift is such a favourite of mine (don't be shocked, I know it is speaking like one of the wicked) that I shall be glad to have his stile recommended and if possible brought back into fashion and I hope to see Cadenus and Vanessa made into sense. . . . The Lady whom Miss White wrote was an intimate friend and a sort of élève of Mrs. Delaney, Dean Delaney's second wife; her first husband's name Mr. Pendarves."

² i.e. Lydia White.

We had most heavenly weather, which was peculiarly favourable to my fair companions' zeal for sketching every object that fell in their way, from a castle to a pigeon-house. Did your ladyship ever travel with a *drawing* companion? Mine drew like cart-horses, as well in laborious zeal as in effect; for, after all, I could not help hinting that the cataracts delineated bore a singular resemblance to haycocks, and the rocks much correspondence to large old-fashioned cabinets with their folding doors open. So much for Lydia, whom I left on her journey through the Highlands, but by what route she had not resolved. I gave her three plans, and think it likely she will adopt none of them: moreover, when the executive government of postilions, landlords, and Highland boatmen devolves upon her English servant instead of me, I am afraid the distresses of the errant damsels will fall a little beneath the dignity of romances. All this nonsense is *entre nous*, for Miss White has been actively zealous in getting me some Irish correspondence about Swift, and otherwise very obliging.

It is not with my inclination that I fag for the book-sellers; but what can I do? My poverty and not my will consents. The income of my office is only rever-sionary, and my private fortune much limited. My poetical success fairly destroyed my prospects of professional success, and obliged me to retire from the Bar; for though I had a competent share of information and industry, who would trust their cause to the author of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*? Now, although I do allow that an author should take care of his literary character, yet I think the least thing that his literary character can do in return is to take some care of the author, who is unfortunately, like Jeremy in *Love for Love*, furnished with a set of tastes and appetites which would do honour to the income of a Duke if he had it. Besides, I go to work with Swift *con amore*; for, like Dryden, he is an early favourite of mine: I shall do very little for

Thompson, except publishing a few letters of no great consequence which have fallen into my hands.

Pray now, dear Lady Louisa, get all you can collect about Swift. I believe I shall go to Ireland to see what can be done there, and I hope to have a long conversation with your Ladyship on that difficult chapter of "Cadenus and Vanessa." There is certainly some strange confusion in the arrangement of that piece, but I think it possible to retrieve it in some measure, if not wholly. Perhaps there are lines omitted. I find the gentleman to whom Dryden's Life was committed left it at home. I will send it up, however, to Longman & Co. with some books that are going to them by sea. The Marmion is nearly out, and I have made one or two alterations on the third edition, with which the press is now groaning. So soon as it is, it will make the number of copies published within the space of six months amount to eight thousand,—an immense number surely, and enough to comfort the author's wounded feelings, had the claws of the reviewers been able to reach him through the *steel jack* of true Border indifference.

Mrs. Scott offers her respectful compliments. Pray let me have the honour of hearing from your Ladyship at an idle hour. The copy of Marmion will wait on you so soon as the said third edition is published. Meanwhile, believe me, with great respect, your Ladyship's much obliged and faithful servant,
WALTER SCOTT

Ashestiel is only 30 miles from Edinburgh, near Melrose, Newark, etc., all which I will be happy to shew Mr. and Mrs. Morritt in great style.

[*Lockhart and Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*]

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[20th June 1808]

MY DEAR TOM,—I take this opportunity . . . to offer you my best and warmest congratulations upon your

approaching military preferment. I have no doubt you will now not only find yourself extremely comfortable, but also in a situation to save money, which like other things wants but a beginning. . . .

Let me exhort you most heartily to give your mind to an edition of Shadwell, which I think I could dispose of for something handsome for you. I have almost all the original editions, and could take care that the press was properly corrected, and would also revise your notes, as you are diffident in point of language. I am perfectly sure you will find great pleasure in this work if you would but set about it ; and also that your habitual acquaintance with the old dramatists would enable you to make very entertaining notes and illustrations. I do not mention this merely as an easy way of picking up 100 guineas or so, but because I know by experience that one is apt to tire even of reading, unless we read with some special and determined object,—an employment which will fill up pleasantly many hours which might otherwise hang very heavy ; at least you may believe it, I find it so myself, as I am just now seriously engaged in two mighty works, *Lord Somers' Tracts* and *Swift's Works*, which will keep me working for two or three years to come. . . .

Charlotte is just returned from Ashestiel, and joins me in warmest joy to Mrs. Scott on your promotion.—Believe me, dear Tom, yours,

W. S.

Excellent news to-day from Spain—yet I wish the patriots had a leader of genius and influence. I fear the Castilian nobility are more sunk than the common people, and that it will be easier to find armies than generals. A Wallace, Dundee, or Montrose, would be the man for Spain at this moment. It is, however, a consolation, that though the grandees of the earth, when the post of honour becomes the post of danger, may be less ambitious of occupying it, there may be some hidalgo among the mountains of Asturias with all the spirit of

the Cid Ruy Diaz, or Don Pelayo, or Don Quixote if you will, whose gallantry was only impeachable from the objects on which he exercised it. It strikes me as very singular to have all the places mentioned in Don Quixote and Gil Blas now the scenes of real and important events. Gazettes dated from Oviedo, and gorges fortified in the Sierra Morena, sounds like history in the land of romance.

James Hogg has driven his pigs to a bad market. I am endeavouring as a *pis aller* to have him made an Excise officer that station being with respect to Scottish geniuses the grave of all the Capulets. Witness Adam Smith, Burns, etc.

[*Familiar Letters and Lockhart*]

TO RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS, ETC., ETC., ETC.,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON¹

MY DEAR COLONEL,—I am against my will again an intruder upon you concerning the theatre. Upon considering the matter it occurs there might be some difficulty in getting the patent granted to a set of new names whereas there can be none to renewing it in that of Lord Mellville and adding the Duke of Buccleuchs name instead of Duke of Hamiltons. The said noble peers may then if they are so disposed convey the patent to trustees for the public as the Chief Baron proposed. We are all a little anxious to have it settled for which there are to use the

¹ A note in Scott's handwriting appended to this letter runs :

Mr. Walter Scott

Edinr. 7 June '08

The Patent of the Edinburgh Theatre having expired, the Chief Baron and Lord Justice Clerk are desirous that the new patent should be vested in some Public Persons and one or two Literary Characters—and they have requested Mr. Scott to be one of the Patentees.—

It is supposed that the representatives of Mr. Jackson who held the last patent but one are underhandedly endeavouring to get the Patent renewed in their name and Mr. Dundas is requested to endeavour to prevent this from taking place.

Mr. D— wrote to Lord Dartmouth 11th June inclosing Mr. Scott's Letter and recommending it to His Lordship's attention.

words of quack advertisements more reasons than good men would think. A certain party have been making themselves busy in this as in all other matters.

Should this arrangement meet your own ideas will you have the goodness to signify to Campbell that an application in terms of the inclosed note of which Lord Advocate has a copy has your countenance and approbation—I have written a few lines on the subject to the Duke of Buccleuch & am with great regard Your obliged & faithful

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 24 *June*, 1808

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO LORD SOMERS

MY LORD,—I was honoured with your Lordship's letter this morning and beg to assure you that nothing was further from my intention than to be guilty of the least disrespect to your Lordship in the intended republication of the Tracts collected under the name of your great ancestor. I was indeed seeking by means of some of my friends in town a proper channel of requesting your Lordship's countenance to the undertaking when the booksellers found themselves obliged to announce it prematurely to the public from an apprehension of their design being anticipated by others and executed perhaps in a manner less creditable than it is their desire that the present undertaking should be conducted. I have to regret that the opportunity of personal communication on the subject of which I was so desirous should have commenced with the necessity of an apology on my own part which however I trust may be admitted as the fault was altogether involuntary. The plan of the undertaking of which I hope in ten days to send your Lordship (with your permission) an accurate detail is generally as

follows. The 16 volumes of Lord Somers' Tracts are to be compressed in twelve quarto volumes. The arrangement is to be methodized in the following manner. All the tracts are to be in the first place divided according to the reigns in which they were published. Then if each reign will admit of sub-division, into four classes, historical, political, polemical and miscellaneous. In each of these sub-divisions the treatises will be arranged with reference to their respective subject, placing those together which refer to the same point of controversy and observing in other respects a chronological order. It is my desire to give upon the introduction of every new subject such a concise view of the point at issue as may save an ordinary reader the trouble of referring to other works for the information necessary to understand the Tract he is about to enter upon. And I have made a considerable collection of other notes of miscellaneous nature, some for the sake of criticism, others with a view to elucidation. With respect to the memoir of Lord Somers' Life it was my intention to prefix it to two volumes of additional Tracts and in the meantime to employ myself in recovering such information with respect to that great man as my best exertion should procure me access to. And I must own that as I hoped to procure access to the Representative of the Lord Chancellor and as my name is not altogether unknown to the literary world I ventured to promise myself some countenance in that quarter. The time for composing this Memoir will be ample as the Booksellers intend publishing the Tracts at the rate of four volumes in a year which will afford three years before the life need go to press.

I should be extremely glad to know whether this plan is honoured with Lord Somers' approbation in the outline and shall be extremely happy if his Lordship will afford me an opportunity of showing my respect for his judgment and person by complying with any criticism or correction he may be pleased to suggest. I have the

honour to be With all due respect, My Lord, Your most obedient humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 4 *July*, 1808

[*Somers Cocks*]

TO CONSTABLE AND CO.

GENTLEMEN,—Being about to compile and edite a complete Edition of Swifts Works in nineteen or twenty Volumes 8vo with a life of the Author and notes critical and illustrative of his writings upon the same plan with my late Edition of Dryden I hereby offer you the said work in property so far as the same may belong to me by Statute or Common Law for the sum of fifteen hundred pounds Sterling, five hundred pounds of which to be payable during the currency of the work as I may require and the remaining thousand pounds to be settled by bills at six twelve and eighteen months date in equal sums to be dated and granted on the day of publication.

And in case of my death before the compleating of this work I agree in that case that it shall be referred to Francis Jeffrey Esquire what proportion or whether any part of the said Copy money shall be payable to my representatives to be judged according to the progress of the work and the equity of the Case. And the work so far as depends upon me shall be ready for publication about Christmas 1810.¹—I am Gentlemen Your very obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 25 *July*, 1808

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

¹ “So numerous and onerous were Mr. Scott’s engagements that the publication was only effected in 1814, before which date a memorable breach between the distinguished author and his publishers had occurred and been repaired.”—*Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*, iii. 11-12.

SWIFTS WORKS¹

EDITED BY WALTER SCOTT ESQ

With a Life of the author notes critical & illustrative etc.

The present edition of this incomparable English Classic is offerd to the public on a plan different from that adopted by former Editors. In the Life of the Author it is proposed to collate and combine the various information which has been given by Mr. Sheridan Lord Orrery Dr. Delany Mr. Pilkington Dr. Johnson and others into one distinct & comprehensive narrative which it is hoped may prove neither a libel or apology for Swift nor a collection from the pleadings of those who have written upon either side but a plain impartial and connected biographical narrative. By the favour of some freinds in Ireland the Editor hopes to obtain considerable light upon some passages in the Deans Life which have hitherto perplexd his biographers. In preparing the text & notes no labour or expence has been spared to procure original information. The Tale of a Tub for example is illustrated with marginal notes of the learned Bentley transcribed from manuscript jottings on his own copy. Although neither long or numerous they offer some curious elucidations of the author & are a singular instance of the equanimity with which the satire even of Swift was born by the venerable scholar against whom it was so unadvisedly levelld. Some preliminary critical observations are offerd on the various literary productions of the Dean of St. Patricks and historical explanations and anecdotes accompany his political treatises. All those pieces which though hitherto admitted into Swift's works are positively ascertaind not to be of his composition are placed in the Appendix or altogether retrenched. On the other hand the Editor is encouraged to believe that by accurate research some gleanings may yet be recoverd which have

¹ See note on p. 154.

escaped even the laudable and undeniable industry of Swift's last Editor. So that upon the whole he hopes the present Edition will be fully more complete though less voluminous than those of late years. The work will appear in the course of 1810.

[*Stevenson*]

TO THE LORD ADVOCATE

[ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL-COLQUHOUN]¹

MY DEAR LORD,—I send you the theatrical petition which I hope may now be carried through without delay. As Lord Mellville and the Duke are to transfer their patent to Committee they will I hope have no farther trouble in the business than to sign first the petition & then the Conveyance.

I am uncertain whether the form is quite accurate but it may be easily corrected. Mr. Campbell the Solicitor so soon as the petition is signed will give the necessary attendance to get it through the publick offices. Believe me ever My dear Lord Your obliged & faithful

EDIN. *Saturday* [*July*, 1808]

WALTER SCOTT

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK, 21 *July*, 1808

DEAR SIR,—Owing to my residence in London for these some months past, I did not receive your letter till my return to Edinburgh about a fortnight ago, since which time I have been overwhelmed with the professional duty that had been accumulating during my absence.

I consider it as no slight favour that you are willing to entrust me the task of reviewing my early and great favourite the beautiful poem on Local Attachment, and I will write to Mr. Gifford, our chief commander, offering my services. The only objection I can foresee is the poem having been for some time printed; but it has been customary of late years to get over this. I will at the same

¹ See note to letter to the Duke of Buccleuch, vol. iv. p. 370.

time mention to Mr. G. your obliging offer of assistance, which I do not doubt he will consider as highly valuable. It may be necessary to say, however, that I myself have no voice in the management of the Quarterly Review, and am only a sincere well-wisher and occasional contributor to the work. The management is in much better hands ; but I am sure Mr. Gifford will be as sensible of the value of your co-operation as I should be in his situation.

Believe me, dear Sir, your much obliged truly faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—I have received your long and interesting letter and although it is very long since I have been a principal or even a confidant in a love affair yet eleven years of matrimony and quiet domestic duties & pleasures have not proved a greater sedative in my case than old age in that of Father Dryden

The power of beauty I remember yet

Which once inflamed my soul and now inspires my wit.

You cannot suppose that a subject always interesting in itself should in my eyes be less so as applicable to you & involving your happiness. After the uninterrupted freindship of so many years in which our reputation & prosperity has been [so] intimately connected as to go hand in hand it would be very strange if I did not feel the deepest interest in the most important step of your life. And now as the French say *Au fait*.

Your *eclaircissement* with the parents of Miss —¹ is in every respect highly satisfactory shews great good

¹ Who the young lady was I do not know. It was not yet the Christian Hogarth whom James Ballantyne married on the 1st February 1816—of her later. This young lady, I fear, jilted James, as a letter of Scott, previously printed (vol. i. p. 296), will show. Scott's letter has no year date, but the statement that he has been eleven years married points to 1808, too early for the reference to be to the Hogarths.

sense on their part & convinces me that you will not lose their interest from the foolish vanity of wishing to confer their daughter upon a gayer or more fashionable suitor. Mr. — I should suppose has learned from his own success in life the value of commercial industry in a situation like yours and must be well aware that with application to your extensive business and some addition to your pecuniary means of conducting it, wealth is within your power to as great extent as any sober-minded parent could wish his child to enjoy. One thing I miss in this letter of yours you make no mention of having spoken in particular to the Mother who I doubt not is warmly on your side and who has both opportunities and authority to remove the young Lady's scruples and abridge your time of probation which even the father himself does not possess. I should like to know what she said on the subject of promise to the Uncle for I have a notion she could devise a remedy if she pleases.

And now for the principal party concerned who I really think has behaved as well and as prudently in the case as it was possible for a young woman to do. And while I naturally sympathize with your impatience I cannot but think that her frank declaration of affection ought to console you under the delay which she requests from motives which are highly honourable to her sense and feelings. It is no doubt a possible thing that in the course of a twelvemonth she may change her mind but I by no means think that her own apprehension of such an event renders it more probable. On the contrary a young Lady who at an age of vowing eternal constancy can fairly dread the possibility of changing her mind shows I think a reflecting character & that she is conscious of the rapid change and expansion of ideas which have taken place in her mind during the last few years and arguing upon that is diffident where it may stop. I remember asking my old friend Invernahyle one of the bravest Highlanders who ever wore filibeg a very childish question "what he

thought when he first went into battle? ” He told me with great naiveté that he would have given any man a thousand marks to answer that he would not rin awa’. This was the feeling of a brave man & depend upon it Miss S—— thinks like a sensible girl and will be rather more on her guard against first impressions & all the preliminaries of inconstancy than if she professd absolute confidence in the immutable steadiness of her own affections.

At the same time I trust and believe means may be fallen upon to shorten this period of anxious probation. The uncle for example may be applied to if the Father & Mother have no objections. One season in town would be quite enough to give the young Lady a fair opportunity of seeing other faces and hearing other tongues & to show her

—— all she has to know
Is powder pocket-glass and beau.

I do not at all dread the result of this experiment fortified as you are by your interest in her own feelings and by the esteem and good wishes of her parents which whatever novels may say to the contrary always have due weight with an affectionate and grateful disposition. I am only afraid of your injuring yourself by the anxiety of your own temper & that your undue degree of humility will lead you to be cast down or jealous about trifles which has sometimes consequences that the excess of affection cannot excuse. I have known several Faulklands in real life but I never saw a Julia. Consider you have every advantage over your rivals and it will be your own fault if you are not so warp’d in with all Miss ——’s schemes for futurity that she shall sooner form a plan of happiness without the blessing of sight than without your being concern’d in it. I consider your distance as a fortunate circumstance since you will undoubtedly correspond regularly & your meetings may be sufficiently frequent to maintain constancy on both sides & rare

enough to be the object of hope and expectation.—I think you told me Miss —— had a taste for literature—cultivate that as anxiously as you can ; it is an excellent flyflap for coxcombs & teaches a woman how soon their conversation must become tiresome.

Once more keep up a good heart in so fair a cause. You must not suffer your spirits to be overcome 1st because you will become tiresome to the young Lady 2dly because you will lose ground with Mr. & Mrs. —— who probably will not understand your refinements and Lastly because you will convert my proof sheets into love letters. By the way if your letter had contained less joyful intelligence I should have thought you had mixd your ink with tears for it was so pale as hardly to be legible.

I fear our circuit which occurs about the beginning of September will prevent my accompanying you to Glasgow till about the 12th Septr. when if you think my presence can be useful I will be at your service. I will I think be in town on that day to attend a meeting on business & we can go next day to Glasgow together. You will probably wish to stay a day or two there & I will take the opportunity to pay two visits in the neighbourhood when if you please we will return by the falls¹—perhaps you may prevail on the fair Lady & her *pa* & *ma* to go so far as Hamilton or even Lanark—It is a fine country to make love in. Believe me ever yours very truly

ASHESTIEL 19th August [1808]

W S

[Glen]

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,—My absence from this place for these ten days prevented my sooner acknowledging the receipt of Sadler's papers, with the very valuable commentary with which you have favoured me. It is real encouragement to persevere in researches of this kind, when one

¹ *i.e.* the Falls of Clyde.

experiences such friendly readiness in those whose skill and information render them so well qualified to afford it. You are pleased to undervalue the kind assistance you have given, but I can only wish to Heaven that I had such an auxiliary in illustrating the other parts of the work.

I will take the greatest care of Ritson's Ballads, and return them in the way you direct, as well as the Anecdotes of the Selby family. One of these brought to my mind, like the recollection of a dream, the story of the wounded man, who brought up from his stomach the piece of scarlet cloth which the ball had carried in : but my edition has this whimsical circumstance, that one of the Scottish captives who was in very evil apparel, having been plundered when taken at Preston, seeing his companion in calamity make this singular evacuation, begged, as a particular favour, that he would continue his exertions, and if possible bring up cloth enough to make him a pair of breeches. I heard my grandfather tell this story when I was a mere infant ; perhaps he had it from his father, who was a staunch Jacobite, and *out*, as it was called, in the year 1715.

The Shepherd Bard, about whom you so kindly interest yourself, is well, and I hope in the way of doing well. He has got a good farm at the head of Nithsdale, and at a moderate rent ; but is as yet rather short of cash to stock it ; a deficiency which he has supplied very judiciously by grazing a few scores of sheep for other farmers. Times, I think, are likely to mend with him shortly, provided he is prudent, of which I see at present no doubt. The situation of a man, with certain claims on public attention, and whose talents have procured him a considerable degree of attention, is always a painful one, if his circumstances require close and precise economy. But Hogg has hitherto shewed no indisposition to the necessary toil and privation of his state, although he is by no means without his own share of vanity. The Sheep-book was sold to Constable of Edinburgh, whom I have

desired to send you one copy only, as the emolument did not go directly into the author's pocket. It is reckoned by good judges a clever thing.

Mrs. Scott and I, on our return to this place, by Lanark and Peebles, found ourselves on Sunday in a most unpleasing predicament. We had been to see the falls of Clyde, but our journey put me in mind of the *voyage à St. Cloud par terre et retour par mer*. For behold, we were overwhelmed by an absolute deluge, in which every rill became a brook, every brook a river, and every river a sea. As we were in the midst of the waste hills of Tweedsmuir, there was no possibility of stopping : indeed, of the wretched cottages which we passed, most were deserted by the terrified owners. Bridges had in many instances entirely disappeared, and in others stood very uselessly in the midst of the rivers which they ought regularly to have traversed. We fought our way through without much difficulty, fatigue, and danger, which fortunately has not affected Mrs. Scott's health ; for, as for me, I am never in danger of taking cold.

That knave Constable, who was employed to trepan Westmerland, was certainly the person you mention. His being knighted is mentioned, I think, by Stowe. What a pity it was that the father's fate had not descended on a son who so richly deserved it ! I should like very much to see the book you mention. If sent by the mail-coach, to the charge of Messrs. Ballantyne, printers, Edinburgh, they will forward it to me with due care. I have never seen it.

With best thanks for so many favours, and sincere wishes for a personal opportunity of thanking you for them, I am ever Your much obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 10th Sept. 1808.

As you mention Hoddam, you probably know my friend Charles Sharpe.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO MISS SMITH

MY DEAR MISS SMITH,—You are very kind to remember so worthless and lazy a correspondent as I am by letting me hear of, what is always pleasing to me, your success and welfare. I had not indeed failed to make inquiry and had been much pleased by hearing that the Dublin audience exhibited their own good taste in the warmth of their applause. I reinclose Mrs. Sterndale's very interesting letter upon which it is difficult to express my sentiments further than by saying that I understand the value of her approbation and that with such enthusiastic feeling of poetry and indulgence for its faults I heartily hope she will meet with works which will give her more ample scope for the exercise of the first and call less upon the last good quality of a gentle reader than either the *Lay* or *Marmion*. I regret that being nighed in this solitude it is difficult for me to procure a frank. As I wish the packet to find you at Limerick I am afraid I must allow it to travel without privilege.

We are as you supposed snug in our summer retreat and would be heartily glad could we flatter ourselves that we should see you for a week or two ; a short repose from your theatrical labours and the quiet of a country retirement would I believe be of great service to your health. Perhaps you may be in a situation to manage such an indulgence next season without interfering with engagements. Your proposed trip in the winter (though I heartily hope you will make it good) promises more delight to the public than gratification to your private friends unless as a part of it. I am glad you have become acquainted with Young—he is a well-behaved gentleman-like man and quite an enthusiast in his profession. Edinburgh has a great number of theatrical visitants of eminence this summer, Elliston, Bannister Cooke and several others enough to disgust us with our usual fare

which is God knows sorry enough. I think as the new patent is about to be issued there is some chance of putting the theatre on a more respectable footing and more worthy of the honour you do it occasionally.

With the best intentions in the world of finishing and despatching this letter I have let it lie by me for ten days in consequence of my time being put into requisition by some English visitors who engaged me in my hobby horsical office of exhibiting the ruins of Melrose Abbey and some of the other wonders of our wilds, seasoned with many a tale of feuds and of legendary wonder.

You wish me to dramatize my dear Miss Smith and it is an idea that has often occurred to me. But success in that line is of so very difficult attainment and depends on such a variety of requisites with which I am totally unacquainted that I doubt if ever I shall have the courage to risque losing upon the boards of a theatre any poetical reputation that I have acquired. In the days of my youth I wrote a tragedy and believe I have it still lying by me. When you come to Edinburgh you shall see it.—It is upon the vile German plan which was then the rage and is in its present state unfit for any other purpose than to afford you a guess how far you could encourage me to a more serious trial of skill.—I must needs say in justice to myself that my taste is much sobered and mended since this desperate attempt and that I see at least the faults of a bombast and turgid stile though I may be unable to attain a true tone of passion and feeling. Believe me it would give me great pleasure indeed should it ever be my lot to see you in a character of my writing and it would give me some confidence to a dramatic attempt did I think it would be so strongly supported. I question much if a tragedy on the ancient solemn plan would suit the taste of the modern public though something of a dramatic romance or Melo-Drama as it is affectedly stiled might perhaps succeed.

Once more my sweet friend accept my kindest wishes

in which Mrs. S. sincerely joins and believe me your truly faithful

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 17 *Sept.* 1808

I should be very ungrateful if I omitted noticing the very pretty verses of your fair correspondent well pleased should I be to think that my poem deserved her praise as much as the reciter to whom she has committed them—Perhaps I should not understand your request about the seal quite literally; but not thinking arms though crowded with suns moons & stars quite a propos I have used the appropriate emblem of an *owl*.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE¹

ASHESTIEL SELKIRK 18 *Sept.* [1808]

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—The law you know makes the husband answerable for the debts of his wife and therefore gives him a right to approach her creditor with an offer of payment; so that after witnessing many fruitless and broken resolutions of my Charlotte I am determined rather than She and I shall appear longer insensible of your goodness to intrude a few lines on you in answer to the letter you honoured her with some time ago. The secret reason of her procrastination is I believe, some terrors at writing English which you

¹ Joanna Baillie, whose acquaintance Scott had made in 1806 in London, came to Scotland in the spring of 1808. "From Glasgow, where she had found out Struthers (*The Poor Man's Sabbath*), she proceeded to Edinburgh, and took up her abode for a week or two under Scott's roof."—LOCKHART. She undertook there to read and criticise the early drama, *The House of Aspen*, and wrote to Scott a letter printed in *Familiar Letters* from Brown's Square, 4th April. In that letter she mentions a drama of her own on the same or a similar subject, doubtless *The Separation*, to which Scott refers in this letter. The Morritts reached Edinburgh in June of this year and after a visit to the Highlands came to Ashestiel and had just left. The letter was therefore written in autumn, whether Lockhart's date is quite correct or not. See also footnote (1) on p. 56.

know is not her native language to one who is as much distinguishd by her command of it as by the purposes she adapts it to. I wish we had the command of what my old friend Pitscottie calls "a blink of the Sun or a whip of a whirlwind" to transport you to this solitude before the frost has stript it of its leaves. It is not indeed (even I must confess) equal in picturesque beauty to the Banks of Clyde and Evan but it is so sequestered so simple and so solitary that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants without a single attraction for any visitors except those who come for its inhabitants' sake. And in good sooth whenever I was tempted to envy the splendid scenery of the Lakes of Westmoreland I always endeavoured to cure my fit of spleen by recollecting that they attract as many idle insipid and indolent gazers as any celebrated beauty in the land [*sic*] and that our scene of pastoral hills and pure streams is like Touchwoods mistress a "poor thing, but mine own." I regret however that these celebrated beauties should have frowned wept or pouted upon you when you honoured them by your visit in summer. Did Miss Baillie and you meet with any of the poetical inhabitants of that district Wordsworth Southey or Coleridge? The two former would I am sure have been happy in paying their respects to you—with the habits and taste of the latter I am less acquainted.

Time has lingered with me from day to day in expectation of my being called southward I now begin to think my journey will hardly take place till winter or early in Spring. One of the most pleasant circumstances attending it will be the opportunity to pay my homage to you and to claim withal a certain promise concerning a certain play of which you were so kind as to promise me a reading. I hope you do not permit indolence to lay the paring of her little finger upon you we cannot afford the interruption to your labours which even that might occasion. And what are you doing? your politeness

will perhaps lead you to say in answer Why I am very like a certain King of the Thurn distinguishd in the Edda who when Lok paid him a visit

Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold
And combing the mane of his courser bold.

If this idle man's employment required any apology we must seek it in the necessity of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder. We had here two days ago a very pleasant English family the Morritts of Rockby Park [*sic*] in Yorkshire. The gentleman wanderd over all Greece and visited the Troad to aid in confuting the hypothesis of old Bryant who contended that Troy town was not taken by the Greeks. His erudition is however not of an overbearing kind, which was lucky for me who am but a slender classical scholar. Charlotte's kindest and best wishes attend Miss Baillie in which I heartily and respectfully join. To you She offers her best apology for not writing and hopes for your kind forgiveness. I ought perhaps to make one for taking the task off her hands but we are both at your mercy and I am ever your most faithful obedient and admiring servant

WALTER SCOTT

P.S.—I had a visit from the Author of the Poor Mans Sabbath whose affairs with Constable are I hope settled to his satisfaction. I got him a few books more than were originally stipulated and have endeavoured to interest Lord Leven and through him Mr. Wilberforce and through them both the Saints in general in the success of this modest and apparently worthy man. Lord Leven has promised his exertions and the interest of the party if exerted would save a work tenfold inferior in real merit. I address this scrawl to Dr. Baillie's care as the surest way of reaching you. What think you of

Spain? The days of William Wallace and of the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there.

[*Lockhart and Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[*October 8, 1808*]

My giving my name to Weber's Romances is out of the question, as assuredly I have not time to do anything that can entitle it to stand in his title-page; but I will do all I can for him in the business. By the by, I wish he would be either more chary in his communications on the subject of my employments, or more accurate. I often employ his assistance in making extracts, &c., and I may say to him as Lord Ogleby does to Canton,¹ that he never sees me *badiner* a little with a subject, but he suspects mischief—to wit, an edition. In the mean time, suffice it to say, that I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow. Swift is my *grande opus* at present, though I am under engagements, of old standing, to write a Life of Thomson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious. I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of Somers's Tracts; but these are neither toilsome nor exhausting labours. Swift, in fact, is my only task of great importance. My present official employment leaves my time very much my own, even while the courts are sitting—and entirely so in the vacation. My health is strong, and my mind active; I will therefore do as much as I can with justice to the tasks I

¹ The obsequious Swiss valet to Lord Ogleby in Coleman and Garrick's *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766).

have undertaken, and rest when advanced age and more independent circumstances entitle me to repose.

[*Lockhart*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 14th October 1808

I WOULD not have been so long silent my dear Lady Abercorn if I had either had anything interesting to communicate or could have assured myself that in telling my *no-story* I was not intruding upon time which your Ladyship knows so well how to employ much better. The summer has slid away without anything remarkable except that I have been arranging for republication the large collection of Tracts published from Lord Somers' library. This occupation is little more than amusement, yet will be worth £400 a year to me for three or four years. I know your Ladyship will scold me for fagging in this way but it is a sort of relaxation after *Marmion* and Dryden—requires little exertion and is precisely the sort of thing I would wish to do for my own amusement, while it materially assists my family arrangements. As to the rest I have been shooting a little and coursing a great deal and have had the pleasure of some very agreeable visitors from England; particularly a Mr. Morritt and his lady—he is a great friend of Mr. Payne Knight deep in Grecian lore of course which led him some years ago to visit the very ground where Troy-town stood. They had been on a visit to Ld. and Lady Aberdeen¹ and were delighted with their kindness—they staid about a week with us and I shewed them all the remarkables in our neighbourhood and told them a story for every *cairn*.

I am still making collections towards an edition of Swift and promise myself great advantage in this task

¹ The Morritts had been at Haddo in Aberdeenshire. Lady Aberdeen was the daughter of Lord Abercorn. See Arthur Hamilton Gordon (Lord Stanmore) : *The Earl of Aberdeen*, London, 1893.

from a visit to Ireland under your Ladyship's auspices. But we will talk of all this when I have the pleasure of being at the Priory, which I am apt to think will be in the course of a few weeks probably in the beginning of next month. The Commission to which by your Ladyship's kind intercessions I am to act as Secretary is expected (according to Lord Advocate's information) to meet in the beginning of November when my presence will be necessary. As I shall only be wanted for a short time in town I have thoughts of bringing up Mrs. Scott with me who has not been in London for some years.

I should be much honoured by permission to inscribe my magnificent Swift to Lord Abercorn ; but your Ladyship remembers what the Marquis said about Sotheby's *Orestes*. I should not like to lay his Lordship under the dilemma of accepting what he might perhaps justly regard as no great compliment. Any new original work of my own is a very distant consideration. Could I arrange my motions exactly according to my wishes I should like greatly to spend this winter in Spain. I am positive that in a nation so strangely agitated I might observe something both of the operation of human passions under the strongest possible impulse and of the external pomp and circumstance attending military events which could be turned to account in poetry. I do not mean that I would precisely write a poem on the Spanish events but that I would endeavour to collect from what I might witness there so just an idea of the feelings and sentiments of a people in a state of patriotic enthusiasm, as might hereafter be useful in any poetical work I might undertake. The poets of the present day seem always to be copying from the ancients and from each other, I would fain if possible have a peep at the great Book of nature. All this is of course an airy vision yet I cannot banish the wish from my mind though without any hope of gratifying it.

Should this letter be a little dull your Ladyship's

charity must impute it to this deplorable day which after all borders however more on the terrific than the stupifying. It has snowed rained hailed and blown without a moment's cessation, for 36 hours. The river Tweed has come down "three yards abreast" as my hind expresses it—a grand spectacle; the magnificence of which is all I am likely to enjoy for a field of potatoes which it is in the very act of destroying.

I beg my respectful compliments to Lady Maria the Marquis and Lord Hamilton and Mrs. Scott offers hers to your Ladyship. Adieu my dear Lady Abercorn I am ever your Ladyship's much obliged most devoted

W. SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

To [J. B. S.] MORRITT,¹ ROKEBY PARK, GRETA BRIDGE.

MY DEAR SIR,—I was quite happy to learn that Mrs. Morritt had not received any great inconvenience from my injudicious anxiety to shew her as much of the wonders of Yarrow as our time would permit. I was really angry at myself for not recollecting how bad the roads must have been after so much rain. I can only hope I will have a more propitious season the next time I have the pleasure of shewing Mrs. Morritt and you the beauties of Ettricke.

The ornaments on Bishop Bells tomb² which I have this morning received your obliging Draught of are very curious and certainly have some resemblance to those in Strathmore. But there is this essential difference that in the Bishops case they seem to have been merely an

¹ This is the first of the letters to Morritt. Scott has got his correspondent's initials wrong and addressed to H. W. Morritt Esq.

² The tomb of Bishop Bell at Carlisle with its grotesque animal ornamentation, of which Morritt had sent a drawing or tracing. These Scott now compares with the stones in Strathmore, Forfarshire, which Morritt had seen on his way south and Scott on such visits as we have heard of in 1796. For "monuments" later *Familiar Letters* reads "mementoes." Aberlemno is also in Forfar or Angushire, Forres is in Elgin.

arabesque border on which the Artist doubtless exercised his own fancy. Whereas upon the stones they stand in place of all sort of inscription or sepulchral notice whatever and are therefore¹ in the latter case the principal whereas to speak logical upon the tomb of the Bishop I conceive them only to be accessories. The disposition of the Gothic artists of every kind borderd on the grotesque they carved every coin buttress and point of vantage over and over with the wildest forms their imagination could suggest. Still however these were only subordinate ornaments which the spectator sometimes hardly perceived without minute and curious inspection. Whereas the standing stones bear little or nothing else than these pieces of imagery which one would therefore suppose intended in some way or other to bear reference to the events of which these stones are obviously monuments. Besides I think it very unlikely that any person so remarkable as to have a labourd and expensive monument erected over him should have been interr'd at Glamis or Meigle so late as the fifteenth Century without Record or Tradition telling us something of the matter. We know the burial places of the Lindsays Ogilvies Ruthvens Grays Oliphants & other families of rank in Angushshire who lie decently interrd under just such monuments as you usually see in a cathedral *i.e.* when they have had any monument at all erected to them—And I will venture to say that there are few such structures to which tradition does not hold up her lamp to aid us more or less clearly to read the decayd inscription. But the only tradition of these tombs carries us back to the days of romance plainly shewing therefore that no later or better grounded history could be attachd to them. It is very improbable that they could have acquired the name of Vanores² tomb etc unless when

¹ Scott has actually written 'thereof.'

² Scott certainly writes "Vanore's tomb," but one suspects that he meant "Ganore's."

the history of King Arthur was current in Scotland—supposing that to carry us back about 200 years and I can hardly allow less is it probable that in a land of tradition like Scotland the romantic name and history derived from these legends should have in 1600 attachd itself to the tomb of a Scottish chief who had then been only dead one or two hundred years. The fame of a Lindesay or a Lyon would not have been so easily dispossessd and his name would have clung to his monument spite of King Arthur and all his chivalry and of Queen Ganora and all her iniquities. Let me add also that these stones agree exactly in appearance with that at Forres and those at Aberlemno to which history enables us with some precision to ascribe a date namely during the Danish invasions. Yet one word on Bishop Bells monument though not quite to the present purpose. I have been much puzzled with certain antique brass plates used chiefly to collect the offerings at the door of Scottish Churches. Besides something like a scripture [piece in] the centre I have seen more than one of [them] have characters inscribed around the verg[e ea]ch word interchanged with such an emblematic or fanciful monster as occurs in your inscription. This matter interested me so much that I had one inscription carefully copied and shewd it to Mr. Douce who informd me that in the 16th and 17th centuries the principal manufacture of such vessells was in the north of Germany and that they were comparatively of modern date. I think it very likely that the brass ring for Bells tomb may have been imported in like manner & from the same country. This does not bear indeed on the question of the stones which you see I am determind shall be just the younger brothers of those of Deucalion and Pyrrha.

I am impatient to see the history of the “felon Sow.”¹

¹ For the Felon Sow of Rokeby and the Friars of Richmond see Note 38 to *Rokeby*. The ballad in question is *Rookhope Ryde*, first printed by Ritson. See Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*, No. 179.

After much torture of my memory I have discovered at length that what I call'd the "Raid of *Rokeby*" is in truth the "Raid of *Rookhope*" a place in the Bishopric at the head of Weardale. As however you are threatend in the course of a few weeks with a raid from me in person I will bring the ballad along with me. I have been inform'd I may expect to be call'd to London about the beginning of next month and rather think Mrs. Scott seems disposed to accompany me and we reflect with great pleasure on the opportunity it will give us to visit Rokeby park on our way southward and cultivate an acquaintance which does us so much pleasure and honour.

Heber has made us one of his flying visits—although he came all the way from Rippon on purpose we could not get him to stay longer than three days with us—perhaps you have seen him at Rokeby as he is rather an erratic than a fix'd star. Mrs. Scott joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Morritt and I am always my dear Sir your most obliged and faithful Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 15 *October* [1808]

[*Law*]

TO THE EARL OF DALKEITH

MY DEAR LORD,—Had I seen you at length on Saturday I intended to have shewn you the enclosed distressful epistle from the Gentle Shepherd of Ettrick. He is totally destitute & seems to point at the Excise which seems to be the *domus ultima* of Scottish genius, the "grave of all the Capulets" Burns Adam Smith Harry Mackenzie all ended in sitting at the Receipt of Custom¹ so that it seems to be the most natural refuge for poor Hogg who has certainly driven his pigs to a bad market.

¹ Burns settled finally in 1791 as an exciseman in Dumfries at a salary of £70 per annum; Adam Smith in 1778 removed to Edinburgh as Commissioner of Customs; and Henry Mackenzie in 1799 was made Comptroller of Taxes for Scotland, "a lucrative post which he held until his death."—THOMPSON, *A Scottish Man of Feeling*, 1931.

I heard he neglected his sheep & forgot his sheephook a little too literally in his last situation upon which subject I deemed it meet to give him a word of advice to which he alludes in the beginning of his letter. He has I presume no very accurate information on the mode of application necessary to get this appointment but I suppose it ought to be made directly to the Board or through some friendly commissioner. They are I believe put upon trial for some time. If I can relieve your Lordship of any of the trouble you will command me.

I have been plagued to death with theatrical applications under the idea of the Sub-commission taking place under the Duke of Buccleuch & Lord Mellville ; but I hear Rock the present manager gives it out that the Duke has promised him to be continued in his situation. If I knew this to be true I would dismiss all my Sylvester Daggerwoods at once as there would be no occasion for any sub commission. I own however I hope for the sake of the public this is not true as *entre nous* Rock is privately an infamous fellow—Mrs. Siddons is extremely anxious to have the concern—

I beg my most respectful Compliments to Lady Dalkeith & am ever your Lordships faithful & obliged humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 25 *October* 1808

[*Buccleuch*]

TO MR. GIFFORD ¹

[25th *October* 1808]

SIR,—By a letter from the Lord Advocate of Scotland in consequence of a communication between his Lordship

¹ This letter is printed from the original in the possession of Colonel John Murray. Lockhart printed it from “ the rough scroll, this being one of the very few epistles of which I thought it will be as well to retain a copy.” The text differs in detail throughout and some of these variations

and Mr. Canning on the subject of a new Review to be attempted in London I have the pleasure to understand that you have consented to become the editor a point which in my opinion goes no small way to insure success to the undertaking. In offering a few observations on the details of such a plan I only obey the commands of our distinguished friends without having the vanity to hope I can point out any thing of consequence which must not have readily occurred to a person of Mr. Gifford's literary experience & eminence. The task having been so

are important, *e.g.* in place of "as I found he had had some communication with you," the letter to Murray reads "as I found he had held some communication with Mr. Canning." Probably Scott did not wish to advertise too widely that the Government was from the beginning active in the matter. For "we have lost a host in Mr. Frere," Lockhart's version is: "In Mr. Frere we have the hopes of a potent ally." The last paragraph in Lockhart has nothing corresponding in this letter and may be here adjoined: "Once more I have to apologize for intruding on you this hasty, and therefore long, and probably confused letter. . . . I expect to be called to London early in the winter, perhaps next month. If you see Murray, as I suppose you will, I presume you will communicate to him such of my sentiments as have the good fortune to coincide with yours. Among the works in the first Number Fox's history, Grattan's speeches, a notable subject for a quizzing article, and any tract or pamphlet that will give an opportunity to treat of the Spanish affairs would be desirable subjects of criticism." The first number did open with an article on a French publication *Les Affaires d'Espagne*, and contained a criticism, not of Grattan's but of Curran's speeches. The other articles are literary and scientific, including three articles by Scott, a review of Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns*, a criticism of a recent work on Swift, and a quizzing or "whisky-frisky" article on Carr's *Caledonian Sketches*.

The following letter of Erskine shows that Murray had thought of Scott as editor:

TO ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL COLQUHOUN from WILLIAM ERSKINE

EDINR. 23d. Octr. 1808

MY DEAR ADVOCATE,—I delayed answering your letter and returning Mr Cannings, till I had an opportunity of conversing with Walter Scott, whom I saw last night. The plan alluded to is already in some measure begun. Murray the Bookseller in Fleet street went to Ashestiel and stated to Scott that he was anxious to embark in a Review in opposition to the Edinburgh on the most liberal principles, and proposed to him to undertake the office of Editor. This Scott declined, very properly as I think his hands are already too full for such an undertaking and if any assistance or countenance is to be given by Government, the Editor ought to reside in London. That department is to be offered to Gifford, meaning of course *William* not *John*, and will probably be accepted:—and I suspect he is the person Mr Canning has in his eye. Malthus has agreed to give

imposed on me I beg permission to offer my sentiments in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me.

The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances. First that it is entirely uninfluenced by the Booksellers who have contrived to make most of the other reviews mere vehicles for advertising & puffing off their own

his assistance—Scott is likewise willing to do every thing in his power, and as he is much hurt by Jeffrey's Review of Marmion he will be a more strenuous coadjuter than he himself is aware of; we shall look out for troops in Scotland; many will be found in England the instant the thing is launched; and if the present Government more truly estimates the value of such an ally than has been the fashion with its Predecessors, I have little doubt that the undertaking will do well,—always remembering that Murray professes himself willing to pay the Authors handsomely which is the true secret of the Edinburgh Review's success. Thus it stands at present Scott is to see Mr Canning when he gets to Town. In the meantime you may perhaps think it right to communicate the substance of what I have said.

I suspect the plan we have had in agitation of placing the Edinr. Theatre on a respectable footing is about to vanish. It was understood that all competitors were to come forward, and that the Committee were to select the person they judged best qualified, without favour or partiality to any one. The Justice Clerk however has intimated that he has given his promise to Rock, and that therefore *he must* be the man. I conceive this to be a most extraordinary proceeding—To shut the market, instead of making it the most open possible, would be bad enough—but it is much worse to give the place to *Rock*, a man in every respect the most unfit that could be found. Walter Scott and I have intimated to Mr Dundas that if this is to be [the] arrangement we will not consent that our names be in the Assignment: we must be free agents, or not act at all, nor can we agree to take any part of the odium that must attend so miserable a job. This I state to you, as you are one of the proposed Assigns.

My best respects to my Sister and the Children. I am much obliged to you for the Snuff box which Mr Gray has sent. Yours sincerely

WILLIAM ERSKINE

I return Mr Cannings letter

Scott wrote to his friend William Erskine as follows :

DEAR ERSKINE,—I think it right you should know that I have a letter this morning from Ld Dalkeith having these words "In regard to Mr. Rock my father desires me to say that what he says is *not true*. He never promised him his support that is to say not to oppose Mrs. Siddons. In short that my father will not support him against Mrs. Siddons." Make your own use of this. Ever yours

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE ST 7 in morning [postmarked 26 October 1808]

[Miss Erskine]

publications or running down those of their rivals. Secondly the very handsome recompence which the Editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants but actually forces upon those whose rank and fortune make it a matter of indifference to them. The Editor to my knowledge acts on the principle that even Czar Peter working in the trenches must accept the pay of a common soldier. This general rule removes all scruple of delicacy & fixes in his service a number of contributors who might otherwise have felt reluctance to accept of compensation for their labours even the more because that compensation was a matter of convenience to them. There are many young men of talent & enterprize who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, upon whose gratuitous contributions no reliance could be placed & who nevertheless would not degrade themselves by being paid labourers in a work where others wrote for honour alone. From this I deduce two points of doctrine first that the projected work must be considered as independant of all bookselling influence secondly that the contributors must be handsomely recompenced & that it be a rule that each shall accept of the price of his labour. Mr. John Murray of Fleetstreet a young bookseller of capital and enterprize & who has more good sense and propriety of sentiment than fall to the share of most of his brethren paid me a visit some time ago at Ashestiel and as I found he had held some communication with Mr. Canning (altho indirectly) I did not hesitate to give him my sentiments on these points of the plan & I found his ideas most liberal & satisfactory.

The office of Editor supposing all preliminaries arranged is of such consequence that had you not been pleased to undertake it I fear the project might have fallen wholly to the ground. He must be invested with the unlimited power of control for the purpose of selecting curtailing and correcting the contributions ; and as the person immediatly responsible to the Public & to the Bookseller

that each Number shall be published in its due time it will be the Editors duty to consider & settle the articles of which it shall consist & to take early measures for procuring them from the persons best qualified to write upon the several subjects of criticism. And this you will find so difficult if entirely entrusted to auxiliaries that I foresee with pleasure you will be soon compelled to appear yourself (occasionally at least) in the field. At the same time if you think my services worth acceptance as a sort of Jackal or Lions provider I will do all in my power to assist in this troublesome department of Editorial duty. But there is another point of consequence besides the task of providing & arranging materials for each number. One very successful expedient of the Edinr. Editor & on which his popularity has in some measure risen is the art of giving life & interest even to the duller articles of the Review. He receives for example a criticism upon a work of deep research from a person who has studied the book and understands the subject & if it happens to be written which may often be the case in a tone of stupifying mediocrity he renders it palatable by a few lively paragraphs or entertaining illustrations of his own or perhaps by generalising & systematising the knowledge which it contains. By this sort of *finessing* he converts without loss of time or hindrance of business an unmarketable commodity into one which from its general effect & spirit is not likely to disgrace those among which it is placed. Such exertions on the part of an Editor are indispensable to a well conducted review for those who possess the knowledge necessary to review books of research or of abstract disquisition are sometimes unable to put those criticisms however just into a readable far less a pleasant or captivating shape & as their science cannot be obtained "for the nonce" by one capable of writing well the only remedy is that a man of talent for composition should revise their lucubrations. And I should hope many friends & wellwishers to the under-

taking would be disposed to assist in this part of the task & altho they might not have leisure to write themselves might yet revise & correct such articles.

Permit me to add that you Sir possess in a peculiar degree a facility of the greatest consequence to the undertaking in having access to the best sources of political information. It would not certainly be advisable that the work should at its outset assume exclusively a political character. On the contrary the articles upon science & miscellaneous literature ought to be such as may challenge comparison with the best of contemporary reviews. But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting & deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of these periodical works disgraces its pages it is essential to consider how opposite & sounder principles can be most advantageously brought forward. On this ground I hope it is not too much to expect from those who have the power of befriending us in this respect that they should upon topics of national interest furnish the Reviewer confidentially & through the medium of the Editor with accurate views of points of fact so far as they are fit to be made public. This is the most delicate yet most essential part of our scheme. On the one hand it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be tied down to advocate upon all occasions & as a matter of course the cause of administration. Such indiscriminate support & dereliction of independence would prejudice both ourselves & our cause in the eye of the public. On the other hand the work will obtain a decided ascendancy over all competition so soon as the public shall learn (not from any vaunt of the conductors but from their own observation) that upon political subjects the new critics are possessed of early & of accurate information. The opposition have regularly furnished the Edinburgh review with this command of facts so far as they themselves possessed them. And surely you my dear Sir enjoying the confidence of Mr. Canning & other persons in power

and in defence of whose principles we are buckling our armour may safely expect to be intrusted with the political information necessary to give credit to the work & with the task of communicating it to those whom you may chuse to employ in laying it before the public.

Concerning the mode & time of publishing the Review perhaps you will judge a quarterly publication most advisable. It is difficult to support one of more frequent recurrence both on account of the want of important books & the time necessary to collect valuable materials. The name is of some consequence at least in Mr. Murrays estimation, for myself I think any one who has little pretension might serve the turn. The English Review for example once conducted by Gilbert Stewart might be revived under your auspices. The search after regular correspondents whose contributions can be relied upon ought to be begun but should not stop the publication of the first number. I am not afraid of finding many such when the reputation of the work has been decidedly established by three or four numbers of the very first order. Besides hunting about for these persons would make the design public which should if possible be confined to persons worthy of trust for it will have a double effect if the first No. comes on the public by surprize without being prejudiced either by the unreasonable expectation of friends or the artifices & misrepresentations of the enemy. The first No. should be out in January if possible & might contain the following political articles Foxes History Grattans Speeches and any book or pamphlet which could give occasion for a distinct and enlightened view of Spanish affairs. This last alone would establish the character of the work. The Lucubrations of the Edinburgh Review on that topic have done the work great injury with the public & I think the sale of the publication might be reduced at least one half by the appearance of a trial review which with pretensions to the same height of literary talent & independance of

character should speak a political language more familiar to the British ear than that of subjugation to France. After all the matter is become very serious. From eight to nine thousand copies of that review are quarterly dispersed & with all deference to the information & high talents of the Editor (which nobody can think of more highly than I do) much of this popularity is owing to its being the only respectable and independant publication of the kind. In Edinburgh or I may say in Scotland there is not one out of twenty who reads the work that agrees in political opinion with the Editor, but it is ably conducted & how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike the strain of politics so artfully mingled with topics of information & amusement is worthy of deep consideration. But I am convinced it is not too late to stand in the breach. The first No. of our proposed Review if it can be compiled without the plan taking wind & if executed with the talent which may reasonably be expected will burst among the Whigs (as they call themselves) like a bomb. From the little observation I have made I think they suffer peculiarly under cool sarcastic ridicule accompanied by dispassionate argument. Having long had a sort of exclusive occupation of the press owing to the negligence of all literary assistance on the part of those who thought their good cause should fight its own battle they seem to feel with great acuteness any appeal to the reading public like champions who having been long accustomed to push have lost the art of parrying. Now suppose that upon a foe of this humour our projected work steals out only drawing the attention of the public by the accuracy of its facts & the stile of its execution without giving them the satisfaction of bidding a public defiance I conceive that their indignation expressd probably through the Edinr. Review will soon give us an opportunity of coming to close quarters with that publication should it be thought advisable & that with a much better grace than were we to announce

a previous determination of hostility. In the mean while I am for gliding into a state of hostility without a formal declaration of war & if our forces for one or two numbers be composed of volunteers & amateurs we will find it easy when our arms have acquired reputation to hire troops of condottieri & to raise & discipline regular forces of the line. You are a much better judge than I can be who are fit to be put into the van of the battle— You have the Ellis's the Roses (*cum plurimis aliis*) we have lost a host in Mr. Frere & can only hope he is serving the common cause more effectually in another capacity. You can never want scholars while Oxford stands where it did. Richard Heber was with me during Murrays visit & knowing his zeal for the good cause I availd myself of his advice : his brother Reginald would be a most excellent coadjutor & I doubt not to get his assistance. I believe I can command some respectable assistance here but I rely much on that of Mr. William Erskine the Advocates brother in law & my most intimate friend. I think we can get you both some scientific articles & some Scotch metaphysics which you know are fashionable however deservedly or otherwise. My own studies have been rather limited but I understand in some sort literary antiquities & history & have been reckoned a respectable *tirailleur* in the quizzing department of the *Edinr. Review* in which I wrote occasionally untill these last two years when its tone of politics became so violent ; I only mention this lest you should either estimate my talents by my zeal (which would occasion great disappointment) or think me like many good folks more ready to offer advice than assistance. Mr. Murray seems to count upon Malthus for the department of political oeconomy & if you approve I could when I come to town sound Malthus whose study of foreign classics has been proceeding extensively. It (is certain some) push must be made at first for if we fail we shall disgrace ourselves & do great injury to our cause.

I would not willingly be like my namesake, Walter the penniless, at the head of a crusade consisting of a disorderly rabble & I judge of your feelings by my own. But "screw your courage to the sticking place & we'll *not fail*." Supposing the work conducted with spirit the only ground from which it can be assailed with a prospect of success would be a charge of its being conducted intirely under ministerial influence. But this may be parried first by labouring the literary articles with as much pains as the political & so giving to the review a decided character independant of the latter department further the respect of the public may be maintained by the impartiality of our criticism.

[The letter breaks off in this place.]

[*John Murray*]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

[Autumn 1808]

I WISH you would see how far the copy of Queenhoo-Hall,¹ sent last night, extends, that I may not write more nonsense than enough.

[*Lockhart*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 27th October 1808

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—When I last wrote to you I little thought I should have had such truly melancholy occasion to address your Ladyship again. I was quite shocked though hardly surprised to see announced in the papers the heavy loss which the Marquis has sustained in poor Lord Claud. I would be greatly obliged to you my dear Madam when you have a moment's time to let me know how Lord Abercorn

¹ Joseph Strutt's unfinished romance, for which Scott wrote the conclusion of the fourth volume. See General Preface, *Waverley Novels*, 1829, and Appendix No. II.

supports this deep and severe dispensation of providence. I dare not indulge myself with the hope that there is any uncertainty in the report as I heard such precarious accounts of his health from Madeira. It seems as if an evil fate had attended of late the families for whose prosperity and preservation I was bound equally by gratitude and inclination to be most anxiously interested. I saw Lady Dalkeith two days ago for the first time after the loss of poor dear Scott and never passed a more painful interview in my life—She knew my attachment to the poor boy and wept most bitterly indeed. Thus providence chequers the brightest prospects and alloys the most exalted lot by misfortunes which are common to the lowest—but on such subjects consolation is in vain the patient must minister it to himself or await it from the hand of time. Do be so good as to let me know how the Marquis is. I know he will feel this blow most acutely and believe me ever Your very faithful and respectful

W. SCOTT

I HAD written thus far when I was honoured with your Ladyship's letter—God comfort you all for he only can. Our poor departed friend was the delight of all who knew him. Several of his fellow students were in Edinr. last winter & used to talk of him in terms which then gave me the highest pleasure & which I now recollect with fruitless sorrow.

I really thought of asking Lord Abercorn to suffer *Marmion* to be inscribed to him and was only deterred by hearing him express his general dislike to dedications which I thought might be a little hint for my conduct. Truth is that unless the Marquis and the Buccleuch family to whom I am naturally much attached there are none among the great whom I am at all likely to intrude upon in this way for as it is all I ever can do to shew my respect and attachment I would not willingly render it cheap by offering it to persons for whom I felt an inferior

regard. Had Lord Melville continued out of power I should have liked to have inscribed my edition of Dryden to him but there are many and insuperable objections to dedicating to any person in office or next door to it. The next tale of Chivalry shall certainly be Lord Abercorn's, that is it shall be *yours* my dear friend and you shall dispose of it as you please. But *when* it will be written is a question of difficult decision. My Spanish scheme is a mere romance yet had I time next summer I would try to realize it as I learn languages easily and can without inconvenience suffer a little hardship as to food and lodging.

My London journey is still uncertain. I shall perhaps learn something of it to-day for Robert Dundas (Lord Melville's son) and his lady are to spend two days with us upon a pilgrimage to the ruins of Melrose. And Charlotte is calling to me to get out to look after hares and partridges for them, for in the desert we may sometimes say with Robin Hood

The meat we are to dine upon
It runneth yet on foot.

Once more, your truly attached

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[*Oct. 1808*]

MY DEAR SIR,—I did not receive your letter till I came back to this place so that I had not an opportunity to speak to any of the Minto family upon the subject it contains. My connection with the Minto family is scarcely of a nature which would entitle me to intrude such a request upon them by letter but Thomson or Murray can do it more easily than I can.

I hope to see you in the course of a few days as I must be in town before the 20th when the Judges are to arrange every thing for our winter campaign. I have

had a visit this season from Lord Albemarle also from J. Murray so that you are the only proprietor of *Marmion*¹ whom I have not seen at Ashestiel.

I have learnd that Beaumont & Fletcher are still without an Editor which makes me sincerely regret my hands being so full as it is a task I should have liked excessively. Believe me my dear Sir Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Tuesday*

Have you ever got me a copy of the *Examiner*?² I am in great want of it.

Archd. Constable Esq., Care of Messrs. Ballantyne & Co.
[*Stevenson*]

TO WILLIAM MILLER

DEAR SIR,—On the opposite side you will find all that I think it necessary to say by way of advertisement concerning Somers' Tracts. I must beg the favour of the parties concerned to exert themselves to procure me the use of rare pamphlets &c not contained in the original edition or in the Harleian Miscellany. They shall be faithfully restored & if of great rarity may be set from under a transparent horn case so that not even a compositor's thumb shall sully them. I wish also to pillage the *Phoenix Britannicus* & the *Antiquarian Repertory*³

¹ Miller, John Murray and Constable were the joint publishers of *Marmion*.

² *The Examiner* is of course Swift's organ in which he attacked Lord Wharton.

³ *Phoenix Britannicus*: a miscellaneous collection of scarce and curious tracts. . . . Also some choice originals . . . on useful and entertaining subjects, ed. Morgan (J.), Gent. London, 1732.

Francis Grose, Thomas Astle, etc.: *The Antiquarian Repertory*: a miscellaneous assemblage of topography, history, biography, customs, and manners, intended to illustrate and preserve several valuable remains of old times. Chiefly compiled by, or under the direction of, F. G . . . , T. A . . . and other eminent antiquaries. Adorned with views, portraits, &c. A new edition with . . . additions (by E. Jeffery). 4 vols. 4to. London, 1807-9.

with as many original curious tracts as I can get hold of. I think I will be able to enlarge those of the civil wars very greatly but I do not care to make specific promises to the public till I see what progress I can make in fulfilling them. The advertisement of the second and third volume can be altered & enlarged as also that of the first when the work is out. But I think it best to keep in generals at present. I have been in Edinburgh since I saw you & I believe I must soon be in London for a week or two upon some business respecting the Scotch Judicature bill.

Thomson will be a load off my mind & my hands —¹ I understand the Edinr. Review treats of Dryden next No: but in what stile I know not.

Ballantyne tells [me] you are to stop the ancient plays² at two volumes in which case I think you should announce your intention to publish a third for which there are more than ample materials, nay even for a fourth or fifth—But a 3d. volume will be necessary to complete the work. You can feel the public pulse with the two now ready. I thought of taking in the rarer plays of Otway & others of Charles iind's age as Don Carlos &c—

I beg my Compliments to Mrs. Millar & am Dear Sir
Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 30th October 1808

Mr. Robert Dundas & his Lady have been with me for these few days past which prevented my writing sooner.

[*British Museum*]

¹ That is, the *Life* which he had undertaken.

² *The Ancient British Drama In Three Volumes*, London. Printed for William Miller Albemarle Street By James Ballantyne & Co. Edinburgh. 1810.

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—Since I had the pleasure of seeing you I have the satisfaction to find that Mr. Gifford has accepted the task of editing the intended Review. This was communicated to me by the Lord Advocate who at the same time requested me to write Mr. Gifford on the subject. I have done so at great length pointing out whatever occurred to me on the facilities or difficulties of the work in general as well as in the editorial department offering at the same time all the assistance in my power to set matters upon a good footing & to keep them so. I presume he will have my letter by the time this reaches you & that he will communicate with you fully upon the details. I am as certain as of my existence that the plan will answer provided sufficient attention is used in procuring & selecting articles of merit.

I have been also turning over in my mind the plan of the Novels & Romances. In my opinion they should be set about without loss of time beginning with the Novels of Richardson. Fielding & Smollet will lead the van with a very short memoir of each of their lives & a prefatory Essay on the peculiarities of their style. These will be followed by a good selection of novels of less name. Those of late date may however be property but I presume that the proprietors for example of Miss Burneys or Mrs. Ratcliffes may be easily induced to consent to their insertion. I want very much an old catalogue of a large circulating Library (suppose Hookhams or Lanes) to assist my memory in pointing out the works which should be inserted. I have the utmost confidence in this plan succeeding to an extent almost immense & will gladly make you a present of my own time & labour should the work not prove profitable. Dispatch is however the surest fore runner of success. I am endeavouring to get Richardsons Novels—pray send me his Letters lately published.¹

¹ Indeed they had been published four years ago. *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson. . . . Selected from the original manuscripts, etc. By A. L. Barbauld, 6 vol., London, 1804.*

As the criticism will be of a different text and paging, the Novels which in double columns may I think be comprized in two or at most three volumes being either 10 or seven 8vo volumes to one of the new Edition.

Pray dont omit to pick up old romances & novels & tales & above all keep your plan secret. If you send me any packages before the 12th of next month direct them to Ballantynes care. On that day I must be in Edinburgh as our courts sit down—The time of my London journey is still uncertain but must take place before Xmas.

I showd Mr. Robert Dundas (presidt of the Board of Controul) our plan of a review & told him I should call on him for a good account of Indian affairs as opportunity shall offer. He approves highly as does Mr. Canning I am Dear Sir your faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 30th October [1808]

Mr. John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street London

[*John Murray*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

ASHESTIEL 31st October [1808]

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—"From the chase on the mountain as I was returning" our little estaffette brought me your *very very* kind letter. Believe me I am fully sensible of the value of your friendly solicitude and I wish I were as able as desirous to merit its continuance. I may say this with confidence because it is the simple truth that there breathes not the person whose opinion I hold in equal reverence and therefore I leave you to judge how proud I am of the rank you have given me in it. I hasten to tell you that I never entertained for a second a notion so very strange as to dedicate any poem to my friend Jeffrey nor can I conceive how so absurd and causeless a rumour should have arisen. There is a

foundation for the other part of the story though no larger than a *midge's wing*. I had been making a little excursion to Stirling with Mrs. Scott chiefly to show her that interesting part of Scotland and on viewing the field of Bannockburn I certainly said that one day or other before I died I hoped to make the earth yawn and devour the english archery and knighthood as it did on that celebrated day of Scottish glory. This occasioned a little laughing at the time and afterwards and was sufficient according to the regular progression of rumour to grow into a written or perhaps a printed form before it reachd the city of London. But independent of indolence I am greatly too cautious to venture upon any new poetical essay for this long time to come : and as you are kind enough to permit me such ready access to you I shall hope for your opinion on any future attempt long before I have thought of a dedication. As to Mr. Jeffrey I have great personal regard for him and high estimation of his talents I have seldom known a man with equal readiness of ideas or power of expressing them. But I had no reason to be so very much gratified by his review of *Marmion* as to propitiate him by a dedication of any work of mine. I have no fault to find with his expressing his sentiments frankly and freely upon the poem yet I think he might without derogation to his impartiality have couched them in language rather more civil to a personal friend and I believe he would have thought twice before he had given himself that air of superiority in a case where I had any chance of defending myself. Besides I really have often told him that I think he wants the taste for poetry which is essentially necessary to enjoy and of course to criticize it with justice. He is learn'd with the most learn'd in its canons and laws skilled in its modulation and an excellent judge of the justice of the sentiments which it conveys but he wants that enthusiastic feeling which like sun-shine upon a landscape lights up every beauty and palliates if it cannot hide every defect.

To offer a poem of imagination to a man whose whole life and study has been to acquire a stoical indifference towards enthusiasm of every kind would be the last as it would surely be the silliest action of my life. This is really my opinion of Jeffrey not formed yesterday nor upon any coldness between us for there has been none. He has been possessed of it these several years and it certainly never made the least difference between us ; but I neither owe him nor have the least inclination to offer him such a mark of regard as the dedication of any work past present or to come.

I have no thoughts of dipping my desperate quill into Castalian streams for this long and many a day. If I were not actually tethered here by necessity I would take this opportunity of enlarging my stock of poetical ideas by a visit to Spain where there must be noble scope for observation but this is unfortunately out of the question, though I should like it of all things in the world.

If I had the influence you flatter me with, nothing would give me more pleasure as I am sure nothing would do me so much credit as to employ it on behalf of our worthy and modest friend James Grahame. But although the Society of the higher ranks is open to me as to any literary persons whose habits and manners do not disgrace their parties, or in other words who being *lions* are contented to roar you as an it were any nightingale, I know too well how far that sort of selfish attention goes to expect to do any good by it. But I will aggravate my voice if there should occur any opportunity in which I can serve him. The deuce is that his politics will be against him with those whom I [am] most likely to have any weight with. [By] the way Mr. Struther expressed himself with much more sense of obligation than any service I could render him merited. I had a very civil letter from Lord Leven about his poems and he promised to hand the copy to Wilberforce.

I am very busy just now in endeavouring to get the

Edinburgh Theatre put on a good footing. The patent is expired and it is proposed to renew it in a set of Commissioners to be trustees for the public and to lease it from time to time to a fitting Manager. I was to be one of these trustees, got fond of the plan and really hoped that the play-house might be put upon a most classical footing. But our bark has been almost aground and I am like Robinson Crusoe on his raft straining every nerve to prevent the whole cargo slipping into that ancient and Serbonian whirlpool called *Job*—If I succeed my great ambition will be to get up some of your dramas and shew the people what plays ought to be. But all this depends entirely on our getting a sensible and gentleman-like Manager—

I cannot believe people would be brutes enough to prefer the garbage of melo-drama and pantomime to the high tragic feast which upon a stage of a moderate size and with actors of but tolerable capacity the Plays on the Passions would afford them. I have set my heart on the trial being fairly made and you shall see what you shall see.

I am still quite uncertain about my London journey but have been desired to hold myself in readiness to come up on short notice. Mrs. Scott proposes to be with me and you need not doubt that Hampstead will be among our very earliest visits. I will talk over my whole theatrical plan with you for I have the vanity to think of some considerable improvements upon the common mode of representation. Above all I will have the satisfaction of hearing the numbers that are to produce fear and sorrow long long after we are both no more. Charlotte joins in every sort of kind wish to Miss Agnes Baillie and to you. Believe me ever your most faithful and sincerely respectful friend

W. SCOTT

P.S. I am glad Marmion gains ground—every parent likes the youngest child best. The Cid is delightful. I

hope you like Freres translations from the poetical romance[s]. They are in the Appendix.

[*Familiar Letters and Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

ASHESTIEL, *Nov. 2nd, 1808*

MY DEAR SIR,—I wrote you a few days ago, since which I was favoured with your letter of the 26th, containing the lists of the Novels, &c., which were very acceptable. I agree with you that the shape of the Drama is inconvenient, but I really fear there is no other in which our matter will endure the necessary compression. This size is also most convenient for a shooting-seat or other place of temporary residence, as it contains a great deal in little space, and is very easily transported. It has also the convenience of not being “*borrowed*” with facility, and although the book be heavy, the subject is light—were it a volume of Sermons, indeed, a fair lady might endanger her toes by falling asleep with it in her hand. To give the selection some appearance of arrangement, it will be necessary to separate the Translations from the original Novels, to place those of each author together—which I observe is neglected in Harrison’s series—and to keep the Novels, properly so-called, separate from Romances and Tales. I have little doubt that 20 volumes¹ of 700 pages will hold all the Novels, &c., that are worth reprinting, but I will be a much better judge when I see the catalogues. Should we find on strict selection that a volume or two more will be necessary, we can throw the Tales into a separate division. As I am quite uncertain about my journey to town, I think you had better send me the catalogues by the mail coach. The name of work

¹ “Twenty volumes . . . at £15,” Murray had suggested on 26th October. “The collection could not have been completed in less than 200 volumes . . . the cost not less than £20,000. . . . This undertaking eventually fell through.”—*Memoir of John Murray*.

should be fixed. I have thought of two, which I submit to you : "The Cabinet of Novels, being a collection, &c.," or "The English Novelist." I like the first best because it might be varied into "The Cabinet of Tales and Romances ;" but perhaps you can hit upon some one better than either. We must have as many of Charlotte Smith's novels as we can compass—the "Old Manor House" in particular. Pray look out for "Chaou Kiou Choau ; or, The Pleasing Chinese History" ; it is a work of equal rarity and curiosity. I agree entirely with you about Baron Trenck ; but as to Marmontel, don't you think a good selection of memoirs might one day be a more fit receptacle for him than our Cabinet ? Your faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[Smiles]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

November 2nd, 1808

DEAR ELLIS,—We had, equally to our joy and surprise, a flying visit from Heber about three weeks ago. He staid but three days, but, between old stories and new, we made them very merry in their passage. During his stay, John Murray, the bookseller in Fleet Street, who has more real knowledge of what concerns his business than any of his brethren—at least, than any of them that I know—came to canvass a most important plan, of which I am now, in "dern privacie," to give you the outline. I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate (the Right Hon. J. C. Colquhoun) to think of some counter measures against the *Edinburgh Review*, which, politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage. I do not mean this in a party way ; the present ministry are not all I could wish them, for (Canning excepted) I doubt there is among them too much *self-seeking*. . . . But their political principles are sound English principles, and, compared to the greedy and inefficient horde which

preceded them, they are angels of light and purity. It is obvious, however, that they want defenders, both in and out of doors. Pitt's

"Love and fear glued many friends to him ;
And now he's fallen, those tough co-mixtures melt." ¹

Were this only to effect a change of hands I should expect it with more indifference ; but I fear a change of principles is designed. The *Edinburgh Review* tells you coolly, "We foresee a speedy revolution in this country as well as Mr. Cobbett ;" and, to say the truth, by degrading the person of the Sovereign, exalting the power of the French armies and the wisdom of their counsels, holding forth that peace (which they allow can only be purchased by the humiliating prostration of our honour) is indispensable to the very existence of our country, I think that for these two years past they have done their utmost to hasten the accomplishment of their own prophecy. Of this work 9000 copies are printed quarterly, and no genteel family *can* pretend to be without it, because, independent of its politics, it gives the only valuable literary criticism which can be met with. Consider, of the numbers who read this work, how many are there likely to separate the literature from the politics ?—how many youths are there upon whose minds the flashy and bold character of the work is likely to make an indelible impression ?—and think what the consequence is likely to be.

Now, I think there is balm in Gilead for all this, and that the cure lies in instituting such a Review in London as should be conducted totally independent of bookselling influence, on a plan as liberal as that of the *Edinburgh*, its literature as well supported, and its principles English and constitutional. Accordingly, I have been given to understand that Mr. William Gifford is willing to become the conductor of such a work, and I have written to him,

¹ *Clifford*. My love and fear glued many friends to thee,
And now I fall thy tough commixture melts.

SHAKESPEARE, *Third Henry VI.*, II. 6. 5-6.

at the Lord Advocate's desire, a very voluminous letter on the subject. Now, should this plan succeed, you must hang your birding-piece on its hook, take down your old Anti-Jacobin armour, and "remember your swashing blow." It is not that I think this projected Review ought to be exclusively or principally political ; this would, in my opinion, absolutely counteract its purpose, which I think should be to offer to those who love their country, and to those whom we would wish to love it, a periodical work of criticism conducted with equal talent, but upon sounder principles. Is not this possible ? In point of learning, you Englishmen have ten times our scholarship ; and, as for talent and genius, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than any of the rivers in Israel ?" Have we not yourself and your cousin, the Roses, Malthus, Matthias, Gifford, Heber, and his brother ? Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps who would rather write for us than for the *Edinburgh Review* if they got as much as pay by it ? "A good plot, good friends, and full of expectation—an excellent plot, very good friends !" ¹

Heber's fear was lest we should fail in procuring regular steady contributors ; but I know so much of the interior discipline of reviewing as to have no apprehension of that. Provided we are once set a-going by a few dashing numbers, there would be no fear of enlisting regular contributors ; but the amateurs must bestir themselves in the first instance. From the Government we should be entitled to expect confidential communications as to points of fact (so far as fit to be made public) in our political disquisitions. With this advantage, our good cause and St. George to boot, we may at least divide the field with our formidable competitors, who, after all, are

¹ *Hotspur*. By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid ; our friends true and constant : a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation ; an excellent plot, very good friends. SHAKESPEARE, *Henry IV.*, III. 1. 16-20.

much better at cutting than parrying, and whose uninterrupted triumph has as much unfitted them for resisting a serious attack as it has done Buonaparte for the Spanish war. Jeffrey is, to be sure, a man of the most uncommon versatility of talent, but what then ?

“General Howe is a gallant commander,
There are others as gallant as he.”

Think of all this, and let me hear from you very soon on the subject. Canning is, I have good reason to know, very anxious about the plan. I mentioned it to Robert Dundas, who was here with his lady for a few days on a pilgrimage to Melrose, and he highly approved of it. Though no literary man, he is judicious, *clairvoyant*, and uncommonly sound-headed, like his father, Lord Melville. With the exceptions I have mentioned, the thing continues a secret. . . . Ever yours

WALTER SCOTT

[*Smiles*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

November 2nd, 1808

I TRANSMITTED my letter to Mr. Gifford through the Lord Advocate, and left it open that Mr. Canning might read it if he thought it worth while. I have a letter from the Advocate highly approving my views, so I suppose you will very soon hear from Mr. Gifford specifically on the subject. It is a matter of immense consequence that something shall be set about, and that without delay. I am truly surprised at the inexhaustible activity of Mr. Cumberland's spirit. His proposed *Review* cannot be very long-lived—I hope *ours*¹ stands a better chance of

¹ Murray had met Ballantyne and discussed with him the Novelists' Library at Ferrybridge in Yorkshire. “From the information which he then obtained as to Scott's personal feelings and literary projects he considered himself justified in proceeding to Ashestiel . . . to lay before Scott . . . his great scheme for the new *Review*.”—SMILES. He arrived about the middle of October, and on his return to London had written to Scott

longevity. I am truly vexed at being kept in my present state of uncertainty concerning my motions southwards.

The points on which I chiefly insisted with Mr. Gifford were that the Review should be independent both as to bookselling and ministerial influences—meaning that we were not to be advocates of party through thick and thin, but to maintain constitutional principles. Moreover, I stated as essential that the literary part of the work should be as sedulously attended to as the political, because it is by means of that alone that the work can acquire any firm and extended reputation.

Moreover yet, I submitted that each contributor should draw money for his article, be his rank what it may. This general rule has been of great use to the *Edinburgh Review*. Of terms I said nothing, except that your views on the subject seemed to me highly liberal. I do not add further particulars because I dare say Mr. Gifford will show you the letter, which is a very long one.—Believe me, my dear Sir, with sincere regard, Your faithful, humble Servant,

[Smiles]

WALTER SCOTT

To JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—I received two days ago a letter from Mr. Gifford highly approving of the particulars of the plan which I had sketched for the Review. But there are two points to be considered. In the first place I cannot be in town as I proposed for the Commissioners under the Judicature Bill to whom I am to act as Clerk have resolved that their first sittings shall be held *here*

on the 26th touching on the Novelists' Library and mentioning "the advertisement of the New Review which is to appear from the shop of the publisher of the Satirist, each critique to be signed by the author, and the whole phalanx to be headed by the notorious veteran Richard Cumberland Esq." . . . "I understand, indeed I may say with certainty that *Marmion* is to be the second article in the first number . . . and it will probably bear the signature of your friend Cumberland." This will explain allusions in the two letters here dated by Smiles 2nd November. I have not seen the originals to check the dates.

so that I have now no chance of being in London before spring. This is very unlucky as Mr. Gifford proposes to wait for my arrival in town to set the great machine agoing. I wish he would with your assistance & that of his other friends make up a list of the works which the first No: is to contain & consider what is the extent of the aid he will require from the North. The other circumstance is that Mr. Gifford pleads the state of his health and his retired habits as sequestrating him from the world & rendering him less capable of active exertion & in the kindest & most polite manner he expresses his hope that he should receive very extensive assistance & support from me without which he is pleased to say he would utterly despair of success. Now between ourselves (for this is strictly confidential) I am rather alarmed at this prospect. I am willing & anxiously so to do all in my power to serve the work but my dear Sir you know how many of our very ablest hands are engaged in the *Edinr Review* and what a dismal work it will be to wring assistance from the few whose indolence has left them neutral. I can to be sure work like a horse myself but then I have two heavy works on my hands already namely *Somers & Swift*.¹ Constable had lately very nearly relinquished the latter work & I now heartily wish it had never commenced. But two volumes are nearly printed so I conclude it will now go on. If this work had not stood in the way I should have liked *Beaumont & Fletcher* much better. It would not have required half the research & would have occupied much less time. I plainly see that according to Mr. Gifford's view I should almost have all the trouble of a co-editor both in collecting

¹ For the breach with Constable which began shortly after the agreement about the edition of *Swift* had been concluded, and was chiefly due to the brusque manner and Whig prejudices of Constable's sometime partner, Alexander Gibson Hunter, a Forfarshire laird and hard drinker, see *Lockhart*, c. xviii., and *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*. Repeated evidence of Scott's feeling appears in the letters. It was, as Constable records, the beginning of trouble for both Scott and himself.

& revising the articles which are to come from Scotland as well as in supplying all deficiencies from my own stores. These considerations cannot however operate upon the first No; so pray send me a list of books & perhaps you may send a few on a venture. You know the department I had in the Edinburgh Review. I will sound Southey agreeable to Mr. Giffords wishes on the Spanish affairs. The last No: of the Edinr. Review has given disgust beyond measure owing to the tone of the article on Cevallos' Report subscribers are falling off like withered leaves. I retired my name among others after explaining the reasons both to Mr. Jeffrey & to Mr. Constable. So that there never was such an opening for a new Review. I shall be glad to hear what you think on the subject of terms for my Northern troops will not move without pay—but there is no hurry about fixing this point as most of the writers in the first No: will be more or less indifferent on the subject. For my own share I care not what the conditions are unless the labour expected from me is to occupy a considerable portion of time in which case they might become an object. While we are on this subject I may as well mention that as you incur so large an outlay in the case of the Novels I would not only be happy that my remuneration should depend on the profits of the work but I also think I could command a few hundreds to assist in carrying it on—By the way I see notes on Don Quixote advertised—This was a plan I had for enriching our collection having many references by me for the purpose. I shall be sorry if I am powerfully anticipated. Perhaps the book would make a good article in the Review—Can you get me Gaytouns¹ festive Notes on Don Quixote.

¹ Edmund Gayton (1608-1666), a miscellaneous writer described by Anthony Wood as a vain and impertinent author and by Hearne as "vain and trifling," wrote *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote* (fol. London, 1654), a gossip and anecdotal commentary in four books, in prose and verse. It embodies, says the *D.N.B.*, many humorous anecdotes and quotations from the works of little known contemporaries, besides references of high historical interest to contemporary society and "our late stage."

I think our friend Ballantyne is grown an inch taller on the subject of the Romances. Believe me Dear Sir yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 15 *November* 1808

Gifford is much pleased with you personally.

(Private)

Mr. John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street London

[*John Murray*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

18th *November* 1808

SUPPOSING you to have read said scroll, you must know further, that it has been received in a most favourable manner by Mr. Gifford,¹ who approves of its contents in all respects, and that Mr. Canning has looked it over, and promised such aid as is therein required. I therefore wish you to be apprised fully of what could hardly be made the subject of writing, unless in all the confidence of friendship. Let me touch a string of much delicacy—the political character of the Review. It appears to me that this should be of a liberal and enlarged nature, resting upon principles—indulgent and conciliatory as far as possible upon mere party questions—but stern in detecting and exposing all attempts to sap our constitutional fabric. Religion is another slippery station ; here also I would endeavour to be as impartial as the subject will admit of. This character of impartiality, as well as the maintenance of a high reputation in literature, is of as great consequence to such of our friends as are in the Ministry, as our more direct efforts in their favour ; for these will only be successful in proportion to the influence we shall acquire by an extensive circulation ; to procure which, the former qualities will be essentially necessary. Now, *entre nous*, will not our editor be occasionally a little warm and

¹ In a letter to Scott of 9th November in *Walpole Collection*.

pepperish?—essential qualities in themselves, but which should not quite constitute the leading character of such a publication. This is worthy of a *memento*.

As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the burthen of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should, as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner, which might give it him in good earnest,—dine at three on a chicken and pint of wine,—and lay the foundation at least of one good article? Let us but once get afloat, and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all hands must work hard.

Is it necessary to say that I agree entirely with you in the mode of treating even delinquents? The truth is, there is policy, as well as morality, in keeping our swords clear as well as sharp, and not forgetting the gentlemen in the critics. The public appetite is soon gorged with any particular style. The common Reviews, before the appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort of applause to everything that reached even mediocrity. The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. The minor Reviews and other periodical publications, have *outrèd* the matter still farther, and given us all abuse, and no talent. But by the time the language of vituperative criticism becomes general—(which is now pretty nearly the case)—it affects the tympanum of the public ear no more than *rogue* or *rascal* from the cage of a parrot, or *blood-and-wounds* from a horse-barrack. This, therefore, we have to trust to, that decent, lively, and reflecting criticism, teaching men not to abuse books only, but to read and to judge them, will have the effect of novelty

upon a public wearied with universal efforts at blackguard and indiscriminating satire. I have a long and very sensible letter from John Murray the bookseller, in which he touches upon this point very neatly. By the by, little Weber may be very useful upon antiquarian subjects, in the way of collecting information and making remarks ; only, you or I must re-write his lucubrations. I use him often as a pair of eyes in consulting books and collating, and as a pair of hands in making extracts. Constable, the great Edinburgh editor, has offended me excessively by tyrannizing over this poor Teutcher, and being rather rude when I interfered. It is a chance but I may teach him that he should not kick down the scaffolding before his house is quite built. Another bomb is about to break on him besides the Review. This is an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, who is himself no despicable composer, and has secured excellent assistance. I cannot help him, of course, very far, but I will certainly lend him a lift as an adviser. I want all my friends to befriend this work, and will send you a *prospectus* when it is published. It will be *valde* anti-Foxite. This is a secret for the present.

For heaven's sake, do not fail to hold a meeting as soon as you can. Gifford will be admirable at service, but will require, or I mistake him much, both a spur and a bridle,—a spur on account of habits of literary indolence induced by weak health—and a bridle, because, having renounced in some degree general society, he cannot be supposed to have the habitual and instinctive feeling enabling him to judge at once and decidedly on the mode of letting his shafts fly down the breeze of popular opinion. But he has worth, wit, learning, and extensive information ; is the friend of our friends in power, and can easily correspond with them ; is in no danger of having private quarrels fixed on him for public criticism ; nor very likely to be embarrassed by being thrown into action in public life alongside of the very people he has reviewed,

and probably offended. All this is of the last importance to the discharge of his arduous duty. It would be cruel to add a word to this merciless epistle, excepting love to Mrs. Ellis and all friends.—Leyden, by the by, is triumphant at Calcutta—a *Judge*, of all things !—and making money ! He has flourished like a green bay tree under the auspices of Lord Minto, his countryman. Ever yours,

[*Lockhart*]

WALTER SCOTT

TO THOMAS SCOTT, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

[19th Nov. 1808]

DEAR TOM,—Owing to certain pressing business, I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell¹ for you, though it is now nearly ready. I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-Jacobin paper, to countermine the Edinburgh Review, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence, with a better strain of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me²; but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the *Baviad*, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I should give all the assistance in my power, especially at

¹ Thomas Scott had meditated, Lockhart says, an edition of Shadwell's plays, which Sir Walter considered "as by no means meriting the utter neglect into which they have fallen." He was to draw on them later for *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

² Murray knew nothing of this. But Gifford in his letter of 9th November says: "Every word that you have written convinces me that you have declined (I know not for what reason) a department for which you are so much better qualified than the person whom your partial judgment has recommended to it."

the commencement ; to which I am, for many reasons, nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and quizzical books of all kinds, might be sent you by the packet ; you glide back your Reviews in the same way, and touch, upon the publication of the number (quarterly) ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you may, for some time at least, send your communications through me, and I will revise them. We want the matter to be a *profound secret* till the first number is out. If you agree to try your skill I will send you a novel or two. You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain, that you are to be leagued with “Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace”¹ ; and thus far I assure you, that if by paying attention to your style and subject you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a means of finding you powerful friends were anything opening in your island.—Constable, or rather that Bear his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review of Marmion, and thus doth “the whirligig of time bring about my revenges.” The late articles on Spain have given general disgust, and many have given up the Edinburgh Review on account of them.

My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by this packet. Her cask of herrings, as well as ours, red and white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We have been both dining and supping upon them with great gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering us. Yours affectionately,

[Lockhart]

W. S.

¹ Henry IV. I. 1.

TO LADY ABERCORN

I OUGHT long ago to have told you my dear friend that my appointment has taken place but I expected to have communicated the news at the Priory in person. After some consideration however among the Commissioners who are partly English & partly Scotch they have at length altered their original plan of meeting immediately in London & resolved to hold their first meetings here & to meet in London early in Spring : of course all chance of my visiting town till March at soonest is now over, a little to my own disappointment and not a little to that of Mrs. Scott. Our little family has now assembled in Edinburgh for the winter & resumed of course our town habits. We have the Duchess of Gordon to enliven us but I shall go very little to her parties for which I have but little time or inclination. She has a good looking Granddaughter (Lady Jane Montagu [?] as I think) just coming out. I suppose she intends to go a fishing for a husband for her having provided for all her daughters. Pray take care of Lord Hamilton though I would give something to see him pleasantly settled yet I would not have her Graces activity exerted in his behalf. We have Sir Samuel Hood¹ here with all his Baltic laurels. His lady is a great friend of ours a daughter of Seaforths and an enthusiastic Highlander of course. Your Ladyship asks me *who* spoke highly of our poor last Lord Claud & I can only answer all who knew or had heard of him at Oxford. We had some very pleasant young men from that university at Edinburgh last winter particularly Lord Desart [?] (of your own kingdom) Mr Fazackerly

¹ He had commanded the *Centaur* (74) under Admiral James Gambier when in September (2nd to 5th) Copenhagen was bombarded and the Danish fleet brought away. "That the attack was necessary no one will now deny. England was fighting for her existence ; and, however disagreeable was the task of striking a weak neutral, she risked her own safety if she left in Napoleon's hand a fleet of such proportions."—*Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ix, p. 236. For Lady Hood see a later letter to Leyden, 25th August 1811.

Sir Thomas Dykes Ackland (who has returned here with a pretty Lady) Mr. Price & several other young men of good family & great expectation. I saw most of them frequently & used to receive them pretty often when the discourse often turned upon their college acquaintances and your Ladyship may believe my enquiries often turned upon young men in whom I took so great an interest as our departed friend & his brother. And they were the oftener questioned on that subject as there was only one voice & one mind among them to say & to dictate all that an enquiring friend could wish to hear of both brothers.

I entered upon my office yesterday as Clerk to those same Commissioners who held their first meeting upon St. Andrews day as an omen of their good intentions towards poor old Scotland. I hope their deliberations may seriously be of some advantage to our law—yet clergymen are not more jealous of new heresies than lawyers of legal innovations. Our principle object is to introduce trial by Jury in civil cases (in criminal we have always enjoyed its benefits) but I have grave doubts how far it will be found to answer. As far as I have observed no two nations in Europe resemble each other less than the English & Scotch I mean the middle classes for those of the highest ranks by travel & company soon rub off all marks of Nationality. The Englishman is very apt to partake of the feelings of those around him & nowhere is a popular impulse so universally acknowledged. Now my Countrymen are shy restive & contradictory in their dispositions & I sincerely believe that utter starvation will hardly bring twelve of them to unite in one verdict unless their national pride is concerned in the question in which cause an hundred will have but one voice—This is sorry stuff to send to a Marchioness but I think my next will convey something more diverting. The whole world are [*sic*] in arms here about the Edinburgh Review for the opinions they have uttered about the Spanish

affairs. There is they say some prospect of an opposing work when we shall have "fight dog, fight bear." Should I hear anything about this likely to amuse your Ladyship Believe me Dear Lady Abercorn Your truly faithful & much obliged

W. SCOTT

EDINR. 31 [*sic*] November 1808

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[13th Dec. 1808]

Now let me call your earnest attention to another literary undertaking, which is, in fact, a subsidiary branch of the same grand plan. I transmit the *prospectus* of an Edinburgh Annual Register.¹ I have many reasons for favouring this work as much as I possibly can. In the first place, there is nothing even barely tolerable of this nature, though so obviously necessary to future history. Secondly, Constable was on the point of arranging one on the footing of the Edinburgh Review, and subsidiary thereunto,—a plan which has been totally disconcerted by our occupying the vantage-ground. Thirdly, this work will be very well managed. The two Mackenzies, William Erskine, *cum plurimis aliis*, are engaged in the literary department, and that of science is conducted by Professor Leslie, a great philosopher, and as abominable an animal as I ever saw. He writes, however, with great eloquence, and is an enthusiast in mathematical, chemical,

¹ "Another enterprise 'beside the Novelists' Library which Murray turned down as too costly in which the Ballantynes endeavoured to induce Mr. Murray to take a share was the *Edinburgh Annual Register* of which James was to be editor." . . . "I look forward," wrote the sanguine James, "to this work as to an inheritance; for the assistance I have received is of the most splendid kind. Mr. Scott's words were, 'Ballantyne, tell Murray not to be hasty in rejecting these shares. If the other parties hesitate and refuse, tell him by all means to take them himself.' In 1813 Constable found that the loss on the Register had never been less than £1000 per annum."—SMILES.

and mineralogical pursuits. I hope to draw upon you in this matter, particularly in the historical department, to which your critical labours will naturally turn your attention. You will ask what I propose to do myself. In fact, though something will be expected, I cannot propose to be very active unless the Swift is abandoned, of which I think there is some prospect, as I have reason to complain of very indifferent usage,—not indeed from Constable, who is reduced to utter despair by the circumstance, but from the stupid impertinence of his partner, a sort of Whig run mad. I have some reason to believe that Ballantyne, whose stock is now immensely increased, and who is likely to enlarge it by marriage, will commence publisher. Constable threatened him with withdrawing his business from him as a printer on account of his being a Constitutionalist. He will probably by this false step establish a formidable rival in his own line of publishing, which will be most just retribution. I intend to fortify Ballantyne by promising him my continued friendship, which I hope may be of material service to him. He is much liked by the literary people here; has a liberal spirit, and understanding business very completely, with a good general idea of literature, I think he stands fair for success.

But, Oh! Ellis, these cursed, double cursed news,¹ have sunk my spirits so much, that I am almost at disbelieving a Providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted, in the shape of this tyrannical monster whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. I am confident he is proof against lead and steel, and have only hopes that he may be shot with a silver bullet, or drowned in the torrents of blood which he delights to shed. Oh for True Thomas and

¹ The news of Napoleon's advance in Spain. In the later letter of 23rd December (p. 139) he has in mind the fall of Madrid and the evidence of Sir A. Wellesley in the examination of the circumstances leading to the Convention of Cintra.

Lord Soulis's cauldron ! Adieu, my dear Ellis. God bless you !—I have been these three days writing this by snatches.

W. S.

[*Lockhart*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—I am glad to see you are all activity. I will soon forward you reviews of Burns fifth volume & of the Cid & hope they will not disgrace my coadjutors. Bruces Life is undertaken by Josiah Walker who I think may do it well as he knew the Abyssinian personally. I have a young friend who I think will do Holmes America well but I cannot find the book in Edinburgh & must trouble you to get a copy forwarded. My friend W. Erskine talks of reviewing Currans Speeches & McNeills new poem which hath just come forth from the shop of Mr. Constable. I have sent to my brother Lewis's romances & the American tale by Mrs. Grant. Any of these contributions which may be unnecessary for the first number may be laid aside till wanted—Our friend Ballantyne has been requested by a number of literary gentlemen here to edite an annual register. The Mackenzies father & son Lord Meadowbank William Erskine I myself (quoth the wren) and several other persons of good literary reputation are concernd. We mean for certain reasons to keep a considerable number of shares ourselves but Ballantyne has been empowered to offer some to the London Trade. As the thing promises extremely well I shall be glad to find that you engage in it for I assure you every nerve will be strained to render it worthy of public acceptance. Ballantynes own share in this concern is not very great but I think it will lead to his acting as Scottish publisher in other instances. Indeed Mr. Constables favour being a good deal withdrawn from him and a very large proportion both of the literary & political world being desirous to

have an Edinr: publisher of activity & judgement as well as constitutional principles. I have no doubt of his succeeding in an eminent degree & being of the greatest service to his friends in London as they may be to him reciprocally. This however is as yet barely in prospect & therefore I beg you will take no notice to Ballantyne that I hinted at such a matter as I know whenever his resolution is fixd you will be the first to whom he will communicate it. From what I have learnd he will neither want funds nor friends & Constables migration of a part of his stock to London seems favorable to the success of such an undertaking. I will certainly give it all the aid in my power having the greatest reason to complain of Mr. Hunters behaviour towards me although I retain great good will to Constable as an individual—

I beg my compliments to Mr. Gifford & believe me My dear Sir your faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 14 Decr 1808

Mr. John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street London

[*John Murray*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[15th December 1808]

I CANNOT help writing a few lines to congratulate you on the royal declaration. I suspect by this time the author is at Claremont, for, if I mistake not egregiously, this spirited composition, as we say in Scotland, fathers itself in the manliness of its style. It has appeared, too, at a most fortunate time, when neither friend nor foe can impute it to temporary motives. Tell Mr. Canning that the old women of Scotland will defend the country with their distaffs,¹ rather than that troops enough be not sent

¹ Scott is quoting here from the work he was editing, the *State Papers of Sir R. Sadler*. When Sadler was pressing for the marriage of Edward and Mary he was told by Sir Adam Otterburn (ii. p. 320), "Our nation being

to make good so noble a pledge. Were the thousands that have mouldered away in petty conquests or Liliputian expeditions united to those we now have in that country, what a band would Moore have under him ! . . . Jeffrey¹ has offered terms of pacification, engaging that no party politics should again appear in his Review. I told him I thought it was now too late, and reminded him that I had often pointed out to him the consequences of letting his work become a party tool. He said "he did not care for the consequences—there were but four men he feared as opponents."—"Who were these?"—"Yourself for one."—"Certainly you pay me a great compliment ; depend upon it I will endeavour to deserve it."—"Why, you would not join against me?"—"Yes I would, if I saw a proper opportunity : not against you personally, but against your politics."—"You are privileged to be violent."—"I don't ask any privilege for undue violence. But who are your other foemen?"—"George Ellis and Southey." The fourth he did not name. All this was in great good-humour ; and next day I had a very affecting note from him, in answer to an invitation to dinner. He has no suspicion of the Review² whatever ; but I thought I could not handsomely suffer him to infer that I would be influenced by those private feelings respecting *him*, which, on more than one occasion, he has laid aside when I was personally concerned.

[*Lockhart*]

a stout nation will never agree to have an Englishman to be King of Scotland : and though the whole nobility of the realm would consent to it, the common people, the women with their distaffs, and the very stones in the street, would rise up and rebel against it." I quote from Scott's preface. The Scots version is given in the Appendix.

¹ Cockburn in his *Life of Jeffrey* disputes the accuracy of this statement, and Jeffrey in 1843 in the preface to his *Selected Contributions* explains that Scott must have misunderstood him, "probably by mistaking a general expression of a desire to avoid *violent* politics for a pledge to avoid all politics."

² But Jeffrey wrote to F. Horner, 6th December : "Cumberland is going to start an anonymous rival ; and what is worse I have reason to believe Scott, Ellis, Frere, Southey and some others are plotting another."

TO GEORGE ELLIS

DEAR ELLIS,—Having nothing better to do but to vent my groans I cannot help thanking you for your last with as rueful gratitude as a sickman pays to his physician. In truth notwithstanding your cordial I cannot but feel exceedingly low. I distrust what we call thorough bred soldiers terribly when any thing like an exertion of talent, the formation of extensive plans of the daring and critical nature which seem necessary for the emancipation of Spain are required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius, for the qualities which naturally and deservedly attract the applause of our Generals are necessarily exercised upon a limited scale. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. The last examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command ; and although I believe in my conscience, that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

Yet give the haughty devil his due,
Though bold his quarterings, they were true.

Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Gallician army, and the additional forces whom every village would furnish in case of success, might possess himself of Burgos, open a communication with Arragon, and even Navarre, and place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 1,000,000 enemies between him and his supplies ;—for I presume neither Castaños nor Palafox are so broken as to be altogether disembodied. But a general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will, I fear, hardly be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful. What would we think of an admiral

who should bring back his fleet and tell us old Keppel's story of a lee-shore, and the risk of his Majesty's vessels ? Our sailors have learned that his Majesty's ships were built to be stranded, or burnt, or sunk, or at least to encounter the risk of these contingencies, when his service requires it. And I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not to sit down contented with a mere saving game. What, however, can we say of Moore, or how judge of his actions, since the Supreme Junta have shown themselves so miserably incapable of the arduous exertions expected from them ? Yet, like Pistol, they spoke bold words at the bridge too, and I admired their firmness in declaring O'Farrel and the rest of the Frenchified Spaniards traitors even when approaching Madrid with a victorious army. But they may have Roman pride, and want Roman talent to support it ; and in short, unless God Almighty should raise among them one of those extraordinary geniuses who seem to be created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I still incline to despondence. If Canning could send a portion of his own spirit with the generals he sends forth, my hope would be high indeed. The proclamation was truly gallant.

As to the Annual Register, I do agree that the Prospectus is in too stately a tone—yet I question if a purer piece of composition would have attracted the necessary attention. We must sound a trumpet before we open a show. You will say we have added a tambourin ; but the mob will the more readily stop and gaze ; nor would their ears be so much struck by a sonata from Viotti. I hope the inside of our booth will be furnished in a more chaste stile. Our measures were much hurried by the necessity of anticipating a work upon contrary principles. We were forced to keep the field open for observe we do not absolutely promise to fill up the whole place chalked out but only in as far as our communications and exertions may enable us to do so respectably. Thus I would hold

it no departure from our plan if any particular branch should be omitted one year and filled up the next as we may think meet. Besides to say truth if you depend on my corps de reserve I must have some interim employment to keep them together which this Register seems to promise. As to the Review I will very soon remit two articles of my own and endeavour to bring forward others. I am cruelly sorry to say as you will be to hear that my brother's exertions on which I had counted a little have been prevented by family distress. The whole family have had a dangerous fever with a sore throat from the effects of which they are but scarcely recovering. A female servant whom they carried from this country has died of this contagious disorder.

The thing in which I fear your Southern friend will fail in your reviewing campaign will be in writing too well for the public whose present state of taste is God knows coarse enough. And perhaps your efforts may reform it.

Do you know the Review begins to get wind here? An Edinr. Bookseller asked me to recommend him for the sale here and said he heard it confidentially from London—Mrs. Scott joins in love to Mrs. Ellis and I am ever yours most truly

W. SCOTT

EDINR. 23 *December* 1808.

[*Owen D. Young*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

EDINBURGH, 30th *December* 1808

MY DEAR SHARPE,—The inimitable virago¹ came safe, and was welcomed by the inextinguishable laughter of all who looked upon her caprioles. I was unfortunately out of town for a few days, which prevented me from

¹ The drawing of Queen Elizabeth dancing.

acknowledging instantly what gave me so much pleasure, both on account of its intrinsic value, and as a mark of your kind remembrance. You have, I assure you, been upmost in my thoughts for some time past, as I have a serious design on your literary talents, which I am very anxious to engage in one or both of the two following schemes. *Imprimis*, it has been long the decided resolution of Mr. Canning and some of his literary friends, particularly Geo. Ellis, Malthus, Frere, W. Rose, &c., that something of an independent Review ought to be started in London. This plan is now on the point of being executed, after much consultation. I have strongly advised that politics be avoided, unless in cases of great national import, and that their tone be then moderate and manly ; but the general tone of the publication is to be literary. William Gifford is editor, and I have promised to endeavour to recruit for him a few spirited young men able and willing to assist in such an undertaking. I confess you were chiefly in my thoughts when I made this promise ; but it is a subject which for a thousand reasons I would rather have talked over than written about—among others more prominent, I may reckon my great abhorrence of pen and ink, for writing has been so long a matter of duty with me, that it is become as utterly abominable to me as matters of duty usually are. Let me entreat you, therefore, to lay hold of Macneill,¹ or any other new book you like, and give us a good hacking review of it. I retain so much the old habit of a barrister, that I cannot help adding, the fee is ten guineas a-sheet, which may serve to buy an odd book now and then—as good play for nothing, you know, as work for nothing ; but besides this, your exertions in this cause, if you shall choose to make any, will make you more intimately acquainted with a very pleasant literary coterie than introductions of a more formal kind ; and if you happen to know George Ellis already, you must, I

¹ Hector Macneill : *The Pastoral and Lyric Muse of Scotland*, 1808.

am sure, be pleased to take any trouble likely to produce an intimacy between you. The Hebers are also engaged, *item* Rogers, Southey, Moore (Anacreon), and others whose reputations Jeffrey has murdered, and who are rising to cry wo upon him, like the ghosts in King Richard ; for your acute and perspicacious judgment must ere this have led you to suspect that this same new review, which by the way is to be called “ The Quarterly,” is intended as a rival to the Edinburgh ; and if it contains criticism not very inferior in point of talent, with the same independence on booksellers’ influence (which has ruined all the English Reviews), I do not see why it should not divide with it the public favour. Observe carefully, this plan is altogether distinct from one which has been proposed by the veteran Cumberland, to which is annexed the extraordinary proposal that each contributor shall place his name before his article, a stipulation which must prove fatal to the undertaking. If I did not think this likely to be a very well managed business, I would not recommend it to your consideration ; but you see I am engaged with “ no foot land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters, and great oneyers ”¹ and so forth.

The other plan refers to the enclosed prospectus, and has long been a favourite scheme of mine, of William Erskine’s, and some of my other cronies here. Mr. Ballantyne, the editor, only undertakes for the inferior departments of the work, and for keeping the whole matter in train. We are most anxious to have respectable contributors, and the smallest donation in any department, poetry, antiquities, &c., &c., will be most thankfully accepted and registered. But the historical department is that in which I would chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous picture of the events of the last momentous year, is a task for the pen of a man of genius ; as for materials, I could procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The

¹ 1 *Henry IV.* II. 1. 71.

appointments of our historian are £300 a-year—no deaf nuts. Another person has been proposed, and written to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every assistance that can be afforded by your humble com-dumble, as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional, but not party. You see, my good friend, what it is to show your good parts before unquestionable judges.

I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

W. SCOTT

[*Sharpe's Letters*]

1809

To [CONSTABLE & CO.]

GENTLEMEN,—When I saw Mr. Constable last I mentond to him that it would be difficult to draw out a complete advertisement of Swift untill we should see what was containd in Nicols edition now coming out. So soon as that can be procured I will furnish you with a full advertisement. I have already procured Mr. Barnets part of that Editn. which is not very important. Something may perhaps be gained by compressing our Edition within a smaller number of volumes than we at first intended & so making it cheaper than the other.

If you continue anxious to advertize in the mean time I should think it enough to say

{ In the press & Speedily will be publishd
Swifts works
A complete collection with notes historical critical &
illustrative & a Life of the Author by
Walter Scott Esq.
This edition is in the form & upon the plan of
Mr. Scotts Dryden.

As this work, from the very unpleasant circumstances accompanying its commencement & progress, is likely to terminate my long & friendly intercourse with your house, I have only to add that if it is likely to prove so dubious a speculation as it seems Mr. Hunter apprehends I am very willing so far as I am concernd to renounce the bargain. But if it is to go on I hope I shall hear of no more complaints untill I have the misfortune to do something to deserve them. I am Gentlemen Your obedt. Servant

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET 2 *January* [1809]

[*Stevenson*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

4th January 1809

MY DEAR SIR,—I trouble you with a few lines to say that I will have my articles ready to send off to Mr. Gifford early next week. They have been strangely interrupted first by my duty as Clerk to a Commission now sitting for reform of our courts & since by a very bad cold. Mrs. Scott sends you her kindest thanks for the Marmion pocket Book.

Ballantyne who takes charge of this note sets off today to meet you. We talkd over a great number of plans or hints of plans together & I am positively certain enough may be done in various ways to make him hold up his character with any Edinr. Publisher. Constable & I are quite broken owing to Mr. Hunters extreme incivility to which I will certainly never subject myself more. It seems uncertain whether even the Swift proceeds but this I will soon bring to a point.

I shall be most anxious to see the Review. It is now publicly talkd of here though by some confounded with Cumberlands attempt. Constable mentiond the report to me & asked me if it was to be an Edinburgh publication. I told him report said no.

I have orderd two or three books out of Brosters of Chesters catalogue & desired him to send the bill to you and I must beg you to receive my review cash when due in order to settle with them.

I fear this snow will render your journey rather unpleasant but I hope Ballantyne will get through notwithstanding. Believe me dear Sir yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Wednesday*

I will review the Addenda to Swift as all the materials are fresh in my head.

[*John Murray*]

TO DR. CLARKE WHITFIELD¹

EDINBURGH, *January 10, 1809*

MY DEAR SIR,—Permit me to offer my best thanks for the honour you have done my verses, in setting them to music, and me in sending the beautiful productions which I yesterday received. Although I am no musician myself, I begin to have some opportunity of hearing it in my domestic hours, as my oldest girl, though very young, begins to practise a little. I have as yet only heard “Lochinvar” which I think very fine,² and have no doubt that the rest will support (they can hardly increase) the high reputation of the composer.

I should have liked wonderfully to have been at Cambridge when your music was performed in full glory. I have a wretched ear myself, yet have great pleasure in some passages. This circumstance is the more provoking, as I believe no man in Britain had more songs of all kinds by heart than I could have mustered. It is a great comfort however, that though I am not capable of whistling a tune myself, I have been in so many instances the means of calling forth your delightful strains. I request you will believe me very proud of this circumstance. I am, dear sir, yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[*The Annual Biography*]

¹ John Clarke (1770-1836), who added the name “Whitfield” in 1814, organist at Emmanuel, later (1821) Professor of Music at Cambridge. He set to music many of Scott’s songs, as well as songs of Byron, Moore and Joanna Baillie. His work “was excellently adapted to the end he had in view, and to the wants of the period.”—*D.N.B.* He edited the scores of Purcell, Arne and Handel. On 22nd May 1808, Clarke had written to Scott sending his latest publications and describing a performance at Cambridge of “Lady Heron’s song and the song of Fitz-Eustace . . . at one of my concerts in the Senate House” when they were “rapturously encored.”

² A sheet song dedicated to Scott published by Wilkinson & Co. “The rest” refers to the *Song of Fitz Eustace* and *Four Scenes from the Lay of the Last Minstrel*, also by Clarke.

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

DEAR SHARPE,—Your letter was everything that I could wish, and I have little doubt that we will make out the history¹ very well between us. For if you are willing to undertake the toilsome duty of arranging and methodizing and collecting the materials, I thank God I can write ill enough for the present taste, and will undertake to throw as much pepper into the pottage as will make them of the right leaven for the taste of this generation. Observe, I altogether disclaim, deny, upgive, overgive, and deliver any claim, right, or title to share in the £300. As I have a small interest in the work, I shall be well paid by its success, in which I think it cannot fail. The letters you mention will be most acceptable. As our book will require some dispatch, it would be highly desirable, so soon as weather and your health permit, that we were to have some chat together over this and other projects. If you will favour us so far when you come to town, I have a chamber in the wall in which I could lodge you tolerably well. It is very small, indeed, but the Cabbins is convenient, and may suit you, in case the Miss Campbells are not in town, better than an empty house. As for the Review,² *perge, perge!*—fear nothing; you have yet to learn the magic virtue of calling yourself *we*. I never knew the emphatic force of that pronoun till I became a reviewer, and then I no longer wondered at its being a royal attribute. Seriously, I will be most happy to transmit an article written with your usual fun to Anti-Jacobin Gifford, and will be bail for its being kindly received. I think also if you were here, my friend Thomson,³ the Lord Register's Deputy, might be able to give you material lights for your family history,

¹ *The Edinburgh Annual Register.*

² *The Quarterly.*

³ Thomas Thomson, made Depute-Clerk Register for Scotland in 1806. On Scott's death he was unanimously elected to succeed him as President of the Bannatyne Club.

as his acquaintance with our records is very complete. Your choice of a mottoe is daring for a border family : for my part, I never look into the Justiciary records for the sixteenth and preceding centuries without finding some unlucky “ Gual. Scott intrat. pro furt. equi pertinen. ad—et pro crudeli interfectione dict—damnat. et susp. per coll.”

I wish you would review Crabbe. He has, I think, great vigour and force of painting ; but his choice of subjects is so low, so coarse, and so disgusting, that he reminds me of the dexterity of Pallet,¹ who painted that which is as good for a sow as a pancake, in such a lively manner as to set a whole pigstye in an uproar.

Your opinion quite coincides with mine about Mr Moore. He is not at all deeply concerned in the Review ; the bookseller only mentioned his name to me *en passant*.

Do think of this historical affair. Be you the brisk lightning, the bold thunder I—I’ll give them flash for flash. Your access to military men of skill employed in Spain will enable us to form some judgment of that (I fear) ill-fated business. I will have an excellent opportunity of getting at the diplomatic secrets. Let me hear from you soon, and believe me ever, my dear Sharpe, yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 13th January 1809

[*Sharpe’s Letters*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, 14th January 1809

DEAR SOUTHEY,—I have been some time from home

¹ In Smollett’s *Peregrine Pickle*. Sharpe replied on the 19th and showed entire agreement with Scott’s opinion of Crabbe’s subject-matter. “ Your parallel of Crabbe and Pallet is beyond measure excellent and diverting, so that I cannot get it out of my head. Crabbe’s is surely rough nature, if it be nature which one is tempted now and then to doubt—but he is a hoarse warbler—the merciless knife that carves for the Opera house would make a huge improvement on his notes—and on his notions too, perhaps ; as for a clergyman he is somewhat *free*, methinks ; too hot and particular in his descriptions.”—*Walpole Collection*.

in the course of the holidays, but immediately on my return set about procuring the books you wished to see. There are only three of them in our library, namely—

Dobrizzhoffer de Abiponibus, 3 vols.¹

A French translation of Gomella's History of Oronoquo.

Ramuzio Navigazioni, &c. &c.

Of these I can only lay my hands immediately on Dobrizzhoffer, which I have sent off by the Carlisle coach, addressed to the care of Jollie the bookseller, for you. I do this at my own risk, because we never grant licence to send the books out of Scotland, and should I be found to have done so I may be censured, and perhaps my use of the library suspended. At the same time, I think it hard you should take a journey in this deadly cold weather, and trust you will make early inquiry after the book. Keep it out of sight while you use it, and return it as soon as you have finished. I suppose these same Abipones were a nation to my own heart's content, being, as the title-page informs me, *bellicosi et equestres*, like our old Border lads. Should you think of coming hither, which perhaps might be the means of procuring you more information than I can make you aware of, I bespeak you

¹ Southey was more conscientious than Scott and returned the books, for the library has on its catalogue of 1873: Dobrizzhoffer, *Historia de Abiponibus, equestri bellicosaque Paraguariae natione* . . . 3 tom. 8vo. Viennae, 1784. We have also an English translation by Sarah Coleridge. The title in the original edition (Madrid, 1741) of Gumilla's History runs: *El Orinoco Ilustrado, Historia Natural, Civil, y Geographica, De Este Gran Rio, etc.* . . . Escrita por El P. Joseph Gumilla, de la Compañia de Jesus, Missionero, y Superior de las Misiones del Orinoco, etc. The *segunda impression, revista, y aumentada*, 2 tom., appeared in 1745 (Madrid); a *nueva impression*, 2 tom., in 1791 (Barcelona). The title of the French translation, alluded to in this letter, reads: *Histoire naturelle, civile et geographique de L'Orenoque, etc. par le P. Joseph Gumilla, etc., Traduite de l'Espagnol sur la seconde Edition, par M. Eidous, ci-devant Ingenieur des Armees de S.M.C.* 3 tom. Avignon: 1758. The copy of this French edition in the Nat. Lib. Scott may have been the one Scott sent to Southey. Ramuzio is Giovanni Battista Ramusio who issued various tomi "delle Navigazione e Viaggi" in 1550 and later. Scott supplies the others later, see p. 158.

for my guest. I can give you a little chamber in the wall, and you shall go out and in as quietly and freely as your heart can desire, without a human creature saying “why doest thou so?” Thalaba is in parturition too, and you should in decent curiosity give an eye after him. Yet I will endeavour to recover the other books (now lent out), and send them to you in the same way as Dob. travels, unless you recommend another conveyance. But I expect this generosity on my part will rather stir your gallantry to make us a visit when this abominable storm has passed away. My present occupation is highly unpoetical—clouting, in short, and cobbling our old Scottish system of jurisprudence, with a view to reform. I am clerk to a commission under the authority of Parliament for this purpose, which keeps me more than busy enough.

I have had a high quarrel with Constable and Co. The Edinburgh Review has driven them quite crazy, and its success led them to undervalue those who have been of most use to them—but they shall dearly abye it. The worst is, that being out of a publishing house, I have not interest to be of any service to Coleridge’s intended paper. Ballantyne, the printer, intends to open shop here on the part of his brother, and I am sure will do all he can to favour the work. Does it positively go on?

I have read Wordsworth’s lucubrations in the *Courier*,¹ and much agree with him. Alas! we want everything but courage and virtue in this desperate contest. Skill, knowledge of mankind, ineffable unhesitating villany, combination of movement and combination of means, are with our adversary. We can only fight like mastiffs, boldly, blindly, and faithfully. I am almost driven to the pass of the Covenanters, when they told the Almighty in their prayers, he should no longer be their God; and I really believe a few Gazettes more will make me turn

¹ Wordsworth’s remarks on the Convention of Cintra, afterwards published in pamphlet form.

Turk or Infidel. Believe me, in great grief of spirit,
Dear Southey, ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT

Mrs. Scott begs kind remembrance to Mrs. Southey.
The bed in the said chamber in the wall is a double one.

[*Lockhart*]

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR SIR,—I am truly grieved and ashamed of the ungrateful appearance my long silence must have made in your eyes. For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate and that I should have had the pleasure to wait upon [you] at Rokeby park in my way to town. But after due consideration the Commissioners on our Scottish Reform of Judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrews day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature very much of the detail and of preparing the materials for the various meetings necessarily devolves upon the Clerk and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

Meanwhile however I have been concocting at the instigation of various loyal and well-disposed persons a grand scheme of opposition to the too proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches and consists of the following divisions. A new Review in London to be calld the Quarterly, William Gifford to be the Editor Geo: Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning if possible, Frere and all the ancient Anti Jacobins to be concernd. The first No: is now in hand and the Allies I hope and trust securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the Ark. You can so easily run off an article either of learning or of fun that it would be inexcusable not to afford us

your assistance. Then Sir to turn the flank of Messrs. Constable and Co/ and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which in the vehemence of their Whiggery they have dared to indulge in towards me I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday 1st the celebrated printer Ballantyne (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashestiel) in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher with a long purse and a sound political creed not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with young John Murray of Fleet Street the most enlightend and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co/ who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly I have caused the said Ballantyne adventure upon an Edinburgh Annual Register of which I send you a prospectus. I intend to help him myself as far as time will admit and hope to procure him other respectable co-adjutors. I have been obliged [to send] a long detail of these matters to your freind Mr. Wharton at the instigation of our Lord Advocate.

My own motions Southwards remain undetermined but I conceive I may get to town about the beginning of March when I expect to find you *en famille* in Portland Place. Our Heber will then likely be in town and altogether I am much better pleased that the journey is put off till the lively season of gaiety.

I believe I told you that I had been mistaken in my recollection about the old ballad which I thought referd to your domain of Rokeby proves to be the harrowing of a place calld Rookhope in Weardale in the Bishopric. The thieves were encounterd and defeated by the Weardale men whose prowess is the theme of the song but as [it] possesses no local interest for you and has God wot as little poetry as may be I do not think [it] worth while to make a transcript.

I am busy with my edition of Swift and treasure your kind hints for my directions as I advance. In summer I think of going to Ireland to pick up any thing that may be yet recoverable of the Dean of St Patricks.

Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest and best respects to Mrs. Morritt and Mr. Stanly when you write to him. I am with great regard Dear Sir your faithful humble Servt

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 14 *January* [1809]

[*Law*]

TO CONSTABLE & CO.

GENTLEMEN,—After inspection of the New Edition of Swift by Nichols I conceive some advantage may be gained in the public opinion by holding out an intention of consolidating the mass of information which they have prefixed to their edition into a distinct narrative & also explaining the further pains we propose to take to give superior value to our Edition. I would be glad to know if it meets your ideas. I inclose the scroll of an advertisement.¹

To resume for the last time the disagreeable subject of our difference, I must remind you of what I told Mr. Constable personally that no *single unguarded expression* much less the misrepresentation of any person whatsoever would have influenced me to quarrel with any of my friends. But if Mr. Hunter will take the trouble to recollect the general opinion he has expressed of my undertakings & of my ability to execute them upon many occasions during the last five months & his whole conduct in the bargain about Swift I think he ought to be the last to wish his interest in future compromised on my account. I am only happy the

¹ *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*, vol. iii. p. 11, states that the prospectus of Swift's works accompanied a letter of 25th July 1808 to Messrs. Constable. I have inserted it at that date (see p. 80), but I am now confident that it accompanied this letter of 22nd January 1809 which was not then in my hands.

breach has taken place before there was any real loss to complain of, for although I have had my share of popularity I cannot expect it to be more lasting than in that of those who have lost it after deserving it much better.

In the present circumstances I have only a parting favour to request of your house which is that the portrait for which I sat to Raeburn shall be considered as done at my debit & for myself. It shall be of course forthcoming for the fulfillment of any engagement you may have made about engraving if such exists. Sadler will now be soon out when we will have a settlement of our accompts. I have employd Mr. Weber to make some transcripts from the Charters etc. of which no copies were furnishd to me. I am Gentlemen your obedt. Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 22 *January* 1809

Messrs. Constable & Co.¹

[*Stevenson*]

1

EDINBURGH 25 *Jan'y* 1809

SIR,—Your letter of the 23rd to Constable & Co inclosing Advertisement of Swift was duly received—

As your letter gives me no hope that matters are soon likely to be restored to their old footing between us, and as our endeavours to enter fully upon explanation have already been so very unavailing, I should feel it unbecoming to tease you with any further attempt in that way but should fortunate circumstances lead you to think of it hereafter I can assure you Sir you will find us ready to embrace the opportunity.

The Portrait for which you sat to Raeburn was you know done for me, and is my private property, and however painful it may be to refuse from our long connection, any request of yours yet in the present state of my feelings I cannot think of parting with it, on any account whatever—

The very handsome manner in which you agreed to sit to Mr. Raeburn at the time I made the request, I considered as a strong pledge of the friendship with which you honored me, and I shall have a pride in preserving the Picture as a memorial of those days & this with the repeated assurances when we last met of the good opinion you still are pleased to entertain of me personally will in some degree operate to lessen the regret I feel at the prospect of my concern in Trade being deprived of your future patronage, and with every good wish, I subscribe myself Sir Your very faithfull and obliged Servant

(signed) ARCHD. CONSTABLE

Walter Scott Esq

[*Stevenson*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR SHARPE,—You grieve my præcordia by declining to lend me the heavy lift I had promised myself but I still claim all the subordinate assistance you are so good as to offer me & which I shall deem invaluable.¹ I have received your letters of David Hume which are quite delightful & will be a valuable addition to our first Register. Pray hasten your Review—Do you remember what Cadwallader says to a person whom he wishes to entertain his wife “Say anything to Beck no matter what nonsense. She is a damnd fool & will not know the difference.” The same say I unto thee with respect to the public—it is inconceivable how coarse & voracious their appetite is for anything that contains spunk & dash ; still they never mind nor are they solicitous about justice—make them laugh (& who can do that better than you) make them but laugh and you have them sure. Dont delay in this business. Bis dat qui cito dat. William Gifford is “casting many a Northward look” and I would bring as many blue bonnets to his assistance as I can. I have already three or four very clever articles. Mend your pen therefore, put gall in your ink, we want a light lively satire on any subject you like. The legend of Jok & the Bean stalk being very popular in my family I appreciate the full force of the application but you need have no fear that Gifford will cry *Mother Mother lend me the cutty axe*. I write in great haste but just to thank you as the Advertisements say for favours past & give a gentle hint of my thirst for future Ever yours W. SCOTT

26 January 1809.

[Hornel]

¹ Scott had proposed that Sharpe should take charge of the historical department of the *Edinburgh Annual Register* (see letter to Sharpe, 30th December 1808). On 19th January 1809 Sharpe had replied saying he was unable to undertake the heavier work—“my ignorance of recent politics is most profound—my slowness in all sorts of composition most lamentable—my natural propensity to anachronism irresistible—and for my style, I am a thorough bred Scotchman.” Still, he adds, “I will do all that I can, and with great pleasure.”

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,— I return the proof sheet which by the way was horribly incorrect being I suppose a first proof. But I have retaliated upon the printer by making large additions to the article ; which was written under considerable depression both of body & mind. I am now however quite alive again. I hope Mr. Gifford will look over the sheet very carefully as it will require accurate revising the corrections being so numerous. Tomorrow I send him a whisky-frisky article on Sir John & will return the letters &c in a separate inclosure to you. I will also send a bill for £7 which I owe to Browster of Chester & which he says may be settled with Longman & Co. I will give you the trouble to do this for me & account out of the reviewing money. I am glad you have arranged so well with Ballantyne who is going on swimmingly. I will do everything that he can reasonably expect to support his new undertaking which has not been started here before it was most peremptorily necessary. Tomorrow I hope to retain a very useful hand for the Review. I expect McNeil &c without delay & will finish the Cid & I think Swift also this week. It has happend most unluckily that the business of the Commission of parliamt. leaves me little time to write excepting after supper. I hope to be in town early in March when we will rally & review our forces. I have got a good light horse reviewer whom you must know if he comes to town a Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe. We shall want I fear light articles. Yours in haste

W. S.

28 *January* [1809]

[*John Murray*]

To JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—Referring to a few lines which I wrote yesterday I take the advantage of forwarding Sir John's Review to send you back his letters under the same cover. He is an incomparable goose but as he is innocent & goodnatured I would not like it to be publickly known that the flagellation comes from my hand. Secrecy therefore will oblige me.

Mr. Wharton Member for Durham has written to me about a pamphlet which he is anxious should be distributed here. I referd him to you as likely to find out a channel not to be obstructed by the influence of Constable which he dreaded. He desires me to apply to you for a copy.¹

I send Browsters bill which be so good as to settle & place to my debit. I reckon on being at least three sheets in this No: which considering my very peremptory avocations is a great exertion. Yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 30th Jan. (1809)

[John Murray]

To ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, 31st January 1809

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—Yesterday I received your letter, and to-day I despatched Gomella and the third volume of Ramuzio. The other two volumes can also be sent, if you should find it necessary to consult them. The parcel is addressed to the paternal charge of your Keswick carrier. There is no hurry in returning these volumes,

¹ Richard Wharton had written to Scott on the 21st: "Mr. Hatchard of Piccadilly who publish'd my pamphlet informs me that he did send 100 copies of it, when printed, to your friend Mr. Murray, for publication in Scotland," etc. The pamphlet is: *Remarks on the Jacobinical Tendency of the Edinburgh Review, in a Letter to the Earl of Lonsdale, by R. Wharton, Esq., M.P.* London: 1809.

so don't derange your operations by hurrying your extracts, only keep them from any profane eye. I dipped into Gomella while I was waiting for intelligence from you, and was much edified by the *bonhomme* with which the miracles of the Jesuits are introduced.

The news from Spain gave me such a mingled feeling, that I never suffered so much in my whole life from the disorder of spirits occasioned by affecting intelligence. My mind has naturally a strong military bent, though my path in life has been so very different. I love a drum and a soldier as heartily as ever Uncle Toby did, and between the pride arising from our gallant bearing, and the deep regret that so much bravery should run to waste, I spent a most disordered and agitated night, never closing my eyes but what I was harassed with visions of broken ranks, bleeding soldiers, dying horses—"and all the currents of a heady fight."¹ I agree with you that we want energy in our cabinet—or rather their opinions are so different, that they come to wretched compositions between them, which are worse than the worst course decidedly followed out. Canning is most anxious to support the Spaniards, and would have had a second army at Corunna, but for the positive demand of poor General Moore that empty transports should be sent thither. So the reinforcements were disembarked. I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer than a general of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra, and the ranks of the victors would have been reinforced by the population of

¹ *Lady Percy.*

And thou hast talk'd
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,
Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,
Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,
And all the currents of a heady fight.

1 *King Henry IV*, I. iii.

Madrid. Would to God we had yet 100,000 men in Spain. I fear not Buonaparte's tactics. The art of fence may do a great deal, but "*a la stoccata*," as Mercutio says, cannot carry it away from national valour and personal strength. The Opposition have sold or bartered every feeling of patriotism for the most greedy and selfish *egoisme*.

Ballantyne's brother is setting up here as a bookseller, chiefly for publishing. I will recommend Coleridge's paper to him as strongly as I can. I hope by the time it is commenced he will be enabled to send him a handsome order. From my great regard for his brother, I shall give this young publisher what assistance I can. He is understood to start against Constable and the Reviewers, and publishes the Quarterly. Indeed he is in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with John Murray of Fleet Street. I have also been labouring a little for the said Quarterly, which I believe you will detect. I hear very high things from Gifford of your article. About your visit to Edinburgh, I hope it will be a month later than you now propose, because my present prospects lead me to think I must be in London the whole month of April. Early in May I must return, and will willingly take the lakes in my way in hopes you will accompany me to Edinburgh, which you positively must not think of visiting in my absence.

Lord Advocate, who is sitting behind me, says the Ministers have resolved not to abandon the Spaniards *coute qui coute*. It is a spirited determination—but they must find a general who has, as the Turks say, *le Diable au corps*, and who, instead of standing staring to see what they mean to do, will teach them to dread those surprises and desperate enterprises by which they have been so often successful. Believe me, dear Southey, yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Southey. I hope she will have a happy hour. Pray, write me word

when the books come safe. What is Wordsworth doing, and where the devil is his Doe?¹ I am not sure if he will thank me for proving that all the Nortons escaped to Flanders, one excepted. I never knew a popular tradition so totally groundless as that respecting their execution at York.

[Lockhart]

TO JOHN MURRAY

2 Feb. 1809

DEAR SIR,—I inclose the promised *Swift*² & am now I think personally out of your debt though I will endeavour to stop up gaps if I do not receive the contributions I expect from others—were I in the neighbourhood of your shop in London I could soon run up half a sheet of trifling articles with a page or two to each but that is impossible here for lack of materials.

When the Ballantynes open shop³ you must take care to

¹ *The White Doe of Rylstone* published in 1815, was written in 1807-8.

² His review for the *Quarterly* of the Rev. John Barrett's *Essay on the Earlier Part of the Life of Swift*, 1808.

³ "In consequence of the publication of the 'Minstrelsy,' the Kelso printer [James Ballantyne] . . . was therefore induced, towards the end of 1802, to remove to Edinburgh. . . . He adopted at first the designation of the Border Press." His premises were in the neighbourhood of Holyrood and then in Foulis Close, Canongate. "In 1805 he removed to better accommodation at Paul's Work," at the North Back of Canongate, near the foot of Leith Wynd. This same year his brother, John, joined him and "was employed as a clerk." James lived close by at No. 10 St. John Street, while John resided in a villa called Harmony Hall, at Trinity. James "continued to edit the *Kelso Mail* for about three years, when the pressure of the printing-office compelled him to relinquish the editorial chair." Another brother, Alexander, succeeded him and conducted the paper for the next twenty years, thereafter becoming a partner in the firm at Paul's Work in 1829 ("James Ballantyne has taken his brother Sandy into the house, I mean the firm."—SCOTT, *Journal*, 21st February 1829). "About 1808 or 1809 a new venture was made by John Ballantyne commencing as publisher. . . . He took the designation of 'Bookseller to the Regent.' . . . The capital for the new firm was arranged, and a deed, deposited for the purpose of secrecy in the hands of Scott, laid the foundation of the firm of John Ballantyne & Co., publishers and booksellers, Edinburgh. Scott appears to have found most of the capital; and 'jocund Johnny' was installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of

have them supplied with food for such a stop-gap sort of criticism. I think we will never again feel the pressure we have had for this No: the harvest has literally been great & the labourers few Yours truly

W. S.

[*John Murray*]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

Feb. 5th 1809 EDINBURGH

THE air, my dear Mrs. Clephane, which you did me the honour to request, I have now the pleasure to send you. It is not, I am told, quite perfect, but it is going where any of its defects, (the nature of which I don't understand) will be easily corrected, and its beauties, if it has any, improved— It is really a Highland air, and sung by the reapers, so I daresay it is no stranger to you, to whom all lays are known that were ever sung or harped in Celtic bower or hall. I need not say how much I was obliged by your kind remembrance of my request about the Borderers lament.¹

Mrs. Scott is not so fortunate as to play much herself, but our eldest girl begins to sing and to practise a little on the piano-forte with some hopes of success. She is indulged with a copy of the ballad, for the beautiful

Constable, and as publisher in Scotland, for John Murray, of the new *Quarterly Review*, which had been started in opposition to the *Edinburgh*. . . . The first work published by John Ballantyne," and printed by James, "was 'The Lady of the Lake' ("in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with, moreover, an engraved frontispiece of Saxon's portrait of Scott; the price of the book, two guineas."—LOCKHART). . . . After the business was fairly begun, Scott, greatly to the annoyance of Constable, almost wholly withdrew himself from the premises of the latter in the High Street, and directed his steps to the cheerful and handsome rooms of John Ballantyne in Hanover Street." James eventually removed from St. John Street to No. 3 Heriot Row, which house, in the collapse of 1826, he had to surrender to his creditors. In 1829, at the time of his wife's death, he resided in Albany Street. "Some time after he removed to Hill Street, and here he died on January 17, 1833." See *The Ballantyne Press and its Founders*, 1796-1908 (Edinburgh, 1909).

¹ Later in the year Lady Hood informed him in a postscript: "I must tell you that the Moss troopers lament is by Mrs. Clephane."

original is reserved to be inserted in a precious volume of mine in which I keep what I value most.

I have not heard from Miss Seward this long time, and grieve at your account of her health— She has a warm enthusiastic feeling of poetry, and an excellent heart, which is a better thing.

I have some thoughts of being in London in a few weeks, when I hope to see you as I have a world of questions to ask about Highland song and poetry, which no one but you can answer. One day or other, I hope to attempt a Highland poem, as I am warmly attached both to the country and the character of its inhabitants. My father had many visitors from Argyleshire when I was a boy, chiefly old men who had been *out* in 1745, and I used to hang upon their tales with the utmost delight.

Once more, dear Madam, receive my thanks and believe me, Your truly obliged and humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

You mention an air to Lochinvar, but I believe mean the enclosed. The said Lochinvar has been lately well set by Dr. Clark of Cambridge. I had no tune particularly in my view when the ballad was written but for *Eleu Loro* I thought of the enclosed.

[*Northampton*]

To JOHN MURRAY

MY DEAR SIR,—Be so kind as to forward the inclosed for my brother Major Scott now not far distant from you : as he has not many acquaintances in town I venture to request you to shew him any little attention which lie in your way. You will find him a gentlemanlike civil man.

The Edinburgh has at length come forth—& with a good deal of spirit—but we will be better prepared for them the next time & at least divide the public with them. I hope soon to hear all my contributions have come to hand. Not a line yet from Sharpe or Douglas. This is

the true curse of Gentlemen writers with a pox to them. Before I come to London I hope to have at least three veterans retained in constant pay—I mean that will keep their engagements for an article each. I am most anxious to know how you get on—I hope also to bring my list of novels under protest as we say in Scotland to *Add & Eke*. Ever yours truly W. SCOTT

EDINR. 10th Feby. [1809]

Mr. Murray

[*John Murray*]

TO PATRICK MURRAY

MY DEAR MURRAY,—Our friend Adam Fergusson has persuaded me that you would be glad to know from good authority some of the politics of literature which like all other politics have raged pretty violently of late. You will therefore please to be informed that it has, tho' rather too late, been resolved upon, to attempt to divide the public with the Edinburgh Reviewers, & try if it be not possible by a little learning¹ & fun upon the other side of the question to balance the extensive & extending influence which that periodical publication has acquired. William Gifford, renowned as the Author of the *Baviad* & *Maeviad*, & as the Editor of the Anti-jacobin newspaper is the Manager of this new work which is to be called the "Quarterly Review." I have some reasons for not being very sanguine in my hopes of success. The energy of folks in a right cause is always greatly inferior to that of their adversaries. They trust good souls to the intrinsic merit of their cause & let it stick like Aesops Waggon in the slough while they address prayers to Hercules instead of flogging the horses, & putting shoulder to the wheel. Yet the aggregate of talent from which assistance is expected is very formidable, & if Gifford can spur on his Co-adjutors I rather think we will make a handsome skirmish.

¹ So Abbotsford copies ; "havering" in *Familiar Letters*.

Now the corollary to this proposal is one which is in some degree mine own device: namely an Annual Register in Edinburgh, to prevent the opposite faction from establishing such a work. For this purpose I have encouraged the faithful Ballantyne in his resolution to extend his business from the printing into the publishing line, and he hath compounded the enclosed which tho' rather in too ambitious a stile has drawn a great deal of public attention. The younger brother John is to manage the Bookselling & Co. If you order any of the above works (which you will doubtless do) I wish you would take it from this new shop. They have also a share of the Quarterly Review and start in direct opposition to those misproud stationers Constable & Hunter.¹—

Now my dear friend you must give us a little assistance in this matter of the Register. You have I know many curious letters from the learned of the last generation, & I think you might find one or two among them which could without impropriety, & to the great advantage of the public be printed in such a deposit. I am very anxious to get any scraps that can make the first volume as respectable as possible. I intend to revise & overlook the historical part, & as I am going to London I have little doubt I shall get access to materials of the most important kind. Indeed Mr. Canning has promised me all assistance upon this head.

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Murray & I am with great regard Yours faithfully

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 15 *Feb*y. [1809]

Adam is gone to Tweeddale for a few days, but I expect his return daily.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ *The Ballantyne Press*, referring to this new bookselling firm, alludes to "the reputed incivility which he [Scott] received from Mr. Hunter, the publisher's [Constable's] partner," p. 42.

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR SHARPE,—Your critique came safe two days ago, and I instantly forwarded it for London, after glancing it over and laughing heartily. I cut off the upper part of your letter, that Gifford (though unnecessary) may see how very modest you are, and avail himself, should he think that proper, of the privilege you allow him. When you have been as often and as bitterly reviewed as I have been, you will acquire all the indifference of eels that are used to be flea'd, as the cook-wench says. In the meantime, the injury you have yourself experienced ought in all reason and morality to sharpen your quill against others, according to the simile of the valorous Tom Thumb—

“So when two dogs are quarrelling on the street,
With one of them another dog doth meet,
With angry tooth he bites him to the bone,
And *this* dog smarts for what *that* dog has done.”¹

I would willingly embrace your offer of curry-combing Miss Owenson,² who, judging from her “Wild Irish Girl,” seems to deserve such discipline very heartily. But I believe Gifford has taken the handling of her new novel into his own hand.

The good folks in Dumfriesshire do me too much honour to suppose that I am the manager of the

¹ *Grizzle.*

Madam, I go.

Tom Thumb shall feel the vengeance you have raised.
So, when two dogs are fighting in the streets,
With a third dog one of the two dogs meets ;
With angry teeth he bites him to the bone,
And this dog smarts for what that dog had done.

FIELDING, *Tom Thumb the Great*, Act I, sc. v.

² *Woman : or Ida of Athens*, by Miss Owenson, author of the *Wild Irish Girl*, the *Novice of St. Dominick*, etc., is reviewed in the first number of the *Quarterly* in trenchant style : “This young lady . . . is the enfant gaté of a particular circle. . . . She has written more than she has read, and read more than she has thought.” The critic was Gifford, and later Scott writes a little apologetically about it to Lady Abercorn. See p. 284.

“Quarterly Review.” I am a sincere well-wisher and humble contributor to the work ; but the whole controul is in Mr. Gifford, and eke the responsibility. I heartily wish I had some part of the influence ascribed to me, as I would most certainly have pushed the work much faster forward. But as to being the conductor of a Review—upon many accounts it would be the last literary duty I should chuse to undertake.

I will write to you the instant I hear from Gifford¹—which, however, may be long enough—but, *meo arbitrio*, your article will be deemed a capital one even under the caustic regard of the Satirist of the Baviad.—Ever, dear Sharpe, I am, yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN., 17th Feby. 1809.

[*Sharpe's Letters*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—I see with pleasure that you will be out on the 1st Yet I wish I could have seen my articles in proof for I seldom read over my things in manuscript & always find infinite room for improvement at the printers expence. I hope our hurry will not be such another time as to deprive me of the chance of doing the best I can which depends greatly on my seeing the proofs. Pray have the goodness to attend to this.

I have made for the Ballantynes a little selection of poetry to be entitled English Minstrelsy. I also intend to arrange for them a first volume of English Memoirs to be intituled

¹ As a matter of fact Gifford did write three days later, on the 20th : “ You have, indeed, acquitted your promise nobly : yet nothing less was requisite to enable us to complete the first No. Without your uncommon exertions we must have failed. I cannot tell how much I feel obliged to you : at the same time—I speak it with shame—we cannot afford you any great degree of relaxation for the present : for, though assistance is promised, it drops in slowly.”—*Walpole Collection*.

Secret History of the Court of James I
To consist of

Osbornes traditional Memoirs

Sir Anthony Weldon's Court & character of James I
Heylins Aulicus Coquinariae

Sir Edward Peyton's Rise & fall of the House of
Stewart.¹

I will add a few explanatory notes to these curious memoirs & hope to continue the collection as (thanks to my constant labour on Somers) it costs me no expence & shall cost the proprietors none. You may advertise the publications & Ballantyne equally agreeably to his own wish & mine will let you chuse your own share in them—I have a commission for you in the way of art. I have publishd many unauthenticated books as you know & may probably bring forward many more. Now I wish to have it in my power to place in a few copies of each a decisive mark of appropriation. I have chosen for this purpose a device borne by a Champion of my name in a tournament at Stirling. It was a gate & portcullis with the mottoe *CLAUSUS TUTUS ERO*. I have it engraved on a seal as you may remark on the enclosure but it is done in a most blackguard stile—Now what I want is to have this same gate-way & this same portcullis & this same mottoe of *Clausus Tutus Ero* which is an anagram of

¹ Francis Osborne's *Historical Memoirs on the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, and King James*. [By F. O.] 2 pt. 120. 1658. The copy of this itemed in the Abbotsford Library Catalogue (p. 25) has MS. notes by Sir W. S. [Another copy of pt. 2.] *Traditionall Memoyres on the raigne of King James*. [By F. O.] 120. 1658. Sir Anthony Weldon's *The Court and character of King James. Whereunto is added, the Court of King Charles . . . with some observations upon him*, 1651. Peter Heylin's *Aulicus Coquinariae: or, a vindication in answer to a pamphlet, entitled, The court and character of King James, pretended to be penned by Sir A. W. [Anthony Weldon], and published since his death*. [Anon.] 8vo. London: 1656. Sir Edward Peyton's *The Divine Catastrophe of the kingly family of the House of Stuarts. Or a short history of the rise, reign, and ruine thereof, etc.*, 8vo, London: 1652. *The Secret History of the Court of James I* (by Osborne, Weldon, Heylin, and Peyton, etc.), edited by Sir W. Scott, 2 vols., royal 8vo, was published in 1811. See Abbotsford Library Catalogue, p. 231.

Walterus Scotus (taking two single U's for the W) cut upon wood in the most elegant manner so as to make a small vignette capable of being applied to a few copies of every work which I either write or publish. This fancy of making *portcullis* copies I have much at heart & trust to you to get it accomplished for me in the most elegant manner. Dont mind the expence & perhaps Mr. Westall might be disposed to make a sketch for me.

I am most anxious to see the Review God grant we may lose no ground I tremble while I think of my own articles of which too I have but an indefinite recollection.

What would you think of an edition of the Old English *Froissart* say 500 in the small *antique* quarto a beautiful size of book; the spelling must be brought to an uniformity—the work copied (as I could not permit my beautiful copy to go to press) notes added & illustrations & inaccuracies corrected—I think Johnes would be driven into most deserved disgrace & I can get the use of a most curious MS of the French *Froissart* in the Newbattle Library¹ probably the finest in existence after that of Berlin—I am an enthusiast about Berners *Froissart* & though I could not undertake the drudgery of preparing the whole for the press yet Weber would do it under my eye upon the most reasonable terms & I would revise every part relating to English history.

Be pleased to forward the inclosed to Mr. Miller.

I have several other literary schemes but defer mentioning them till I come to London which I sincerely hope will be in the course of a month or six weeks. I hear Mr. Canning is anxious about our Review—Constable says it is a Scotch job. I could not help quizzing Mr.

¹ The library of Lord Ancrum, afterwards sixth Earl of Lothian. His first wife was heiress of Blickling Hall in Norfolk, whence came most of the treasures of the library, including the famous Blickling homilies of the tenth century, now, with other rarities, being offered for sale in New York by the present marquis. The sixth earl's second wife was Lady Harriet Scott, youngest sister of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Scott's friend. An edition of Berner's *Froissart*, with Memoir and Index by E. V. Utterson, Esq., 2 vols., 4to, 1812, is in the Abbotsford Library.

Robt. Miller who asked me in an odd sort of way as I thought why it was not out? I said very indifferently I knew nothing about it but had heard a vague report that the edition was to be much enlarged on account of the expected demand which had necessarily occasioned some delay. I also enclose a few lines to my brother & am Dear Sir very truly yours W. SCOTT

EDINR. 25 *Feby.* 1809

It is universally agreed here that Cumberland is five hundred degrees beneath contempt.

Mr. John Murray

[*John Murray*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINR. 1st *March* 1809

DEAR SOUTHEY,—By the Carlisle Stage you will receive the 1st volume of Somers Tracts a new edition which I have superintended. I hope you will find something in it entertaining altho' I own I don't consider the selection as very much calculated for amusement especially the first tome. I think you will approve of my including a strange rhyming thing called the Image of Ireland.¹ While I am on the subject of selection I must tell you that to oblige the Ballantynes who are now engaging in the publishing business I have promised them the assistance of my exquisite judgement in making a little pocket collection of fugitive poetry² which I shall reckon

¹ *The Image of Irelande, made and devised by Jhon Derricke, anno 1578. London, 1581.* P. 558 in vol. i. of Scott's edition of *Somers's Tracts*. The annotated text of the "rhyming thing" occupies pp. 563-621.

² This became "*English Minstrelsy. Being A Selection of Fugitive Poetry From The Best English Authors with some Original Pieces hitherto unpublished. In Two Volumes. Printed for John Ballantyne and Co. Manners and Miller, and Brown and Crombie Edinburgh; and John Murray, London. 1810.*" With older poems are verses by Coleridge (the early version of *Genevieve*), Moore, Heber, Scott, Canning, Southey, Joanna Baillie and Wordsworth (*On Visiting Tintern Abbey*). Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

very incomplete without a specimen or two from your poems & those of Wordsworth—As a good and beautiful example of Wordsworths peculiar vein of poetry I intend with his approbation to lay my clutches upon the little ballad called “We are seven” and another short copy of verses called Glen Almain. I would be glad to have your judgement both on my choice & also what specimen I should take from your poetry or whether you have any fugitive little sonnet with which you would chuse to redeem your contribution. The little collection will be most elegantly printed and I hope you will find yourself in tolerable company—both ancient & *modern*—¹

I agree entirely with [you] that Wordsworth lives too much for the lyre ; the study of poetry however delightful in itself is so warped & woven in with the desire of fame that it engages the student too far in pursuit of that most capricious of all fantasms.

Public matters begin to clear up in the Spanish Hemisphere and I suspect Bonaparte has more flax on his spindle than he will be able to spin off in a hurry. I judge chiefly from his return to Paris which I think would never have taken place if he had seen any rational or speedy prospect of trampling out the patriotic flame. He would never have halted until he reached Cadiz if the road had been practicable. The placing himself at the head of an undertaking almost uniformly infers his having provided all the means to insure a tolerable certainty of success and on the other hand he has never

¹ In his reply of 11th March Southey states : “ I have nothing by me which could possibly suit your purpose,—unless perhaps an extract from Kehama may be thought sufficiently entire ; it is very short, & I am disposed to strike it out of the poem, because the most people wont be likely to think it the fittest thing there,—it does not seem to me sufficiently in keeping . . . do not use it unless you think it suitable.” He then gives his decided opinion on the new review. “ The Quarterly is a little too much in the temper of the Edinburgh to please me. No man dips his pen deeper in the very gall of bitterness than I can do . . . but I do not like to see scorn & indignation wasted on trivial objects—they should be reserved like the arrows of Hercules for occasions worthy of such weapons.”—*Walpole Collection*.

hitherto relinquished an enterprize half finished excepting when obstacles intervened which seemed to infer a probability of miscarriage. If the Austrian throws his whole weight into the scale at this moment & places his armies under the uncontrouled command of the Arch Duke the Spaniards will probably soon clear their own peninsula. At least one may reasonably hope that adversity has taught them union and that their next successes will be followed up by more respect and uniform exertion than those which preceded them—

I am as sick as ever dog was of our late parliamentary proceedings—What a melancholy picture of public morals & of depravity not only of feeling but even of taste— My kind Compliments attend Mrs. Southey and I always am truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR SHARPE,—I write in answer to yours in great haste and some tribulation. The tribulation is occasioned by the unexpected decease of my old four-footed friend Camp,¹ who, after near twelve years' faithful service, "life to the last enjoy'd," stretched himself out in his basket and died after a very short illness. The poor old fellow began the world (as they say) along with my wife and I at our marriage, and since that time has almost never been from the side of one or other of us, so that his

¹ "The first of not a few dogs whose names will be freshly remembered so long as their master's works are popular. . . . My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the grave as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him."—LOCKHART. "Camp was by a black and tan English terrier called Doctor, the property of Mr. Storie Farrier Rose Street about 1800 out of a thorough bred English brindled bull-bitch the property of Mr. John Adams of the Riding School adjutant to the Royal Edinburgh Volunteer Cavalry."—Note by Scott, who adds details about his courage, intelligence and devotion.

death awakens a number of former recollections, and gives us a pointed hint how fast we are jogging on in the same tract. So much for effusions, as some coxcomb calls them, of friendship and sensibility. I wish to heaven I had had a sketch of poor *Camp* from your pencil.

I have a letter from Gifford on the subject of your review, in which, speaking of it very handsomely, he regrets his number was printed off before he could avail himself of it. He intended to shorten it and insert it by cancelling the last page, but the hurry of the bookseller prevented his having an opportunity to do so. Your critique will therefore appear in the next number, to which, I am sure, it will give additional value : for mine own part I am particularly glad that it has escaped the manager's scissors, for the only fault I had to it was its being already too short.¹ The Review reached me yesterday morning. I will send it by the Ecclefechan carrier, unless you can point out a speedier method. I am a little disconcerted with the appearance of one or two of my own articles, which I have had no opportunity to revise in proof. Of the sentences I can only say they reminded me of the "Mantle made Amiss"—

" One while it was too long,
Another while too short,
And wrinkled on her shoulders
In most unseemly sort."

I shall say nothing of the handsome compliment you make me at the expence of a very ingenious though somewhat caustic poet—because to disclaim it would be to invite you to shew cause why it should be so—so I shall pocket it quietly, and place to account of your friendship

¹ On this point Sharpe grew querulous in his reply of 5th March : " It vexeth me that my critique hath not been printed, because I have a shrewd suspicion that it never will. I think Mr. G., instead of cancelling one page, will finally reject the whole ; for I guess that he doth not greatly approve, tho you are kind enough to smoothe things a little. It certainly is already só short, that it would have had a strange appearance without its tail—I should have made a figure like that of Cuttie Sark among the Witches ; tho only remarkable for my lack of linen."—*Walpole Collection*.

any balance which it may cause to be deduced from your taste. As to the Review in general, I have hardly had time to glance it over. But the article on "Spain," which heads the work, is capitally written, both in manner and spirit. The whole bears marks of precipitate and hurried composition, but I think enables us to say, like the old Duke of Argyle after the battle of Sheriffmoor—

" If it be na weel bobbit
We'll bob it again."

Believe me, dear Sharpe, yours very faithfully,

W. SCOTT

Private

EDINR. 3d March 1809.

[*Sharpe's Letters*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your very kind letter ¹ reached me a few days ago, and in ample time to make use of the curious

¹ Surtees had communicated several interesting and curious antiquarian matters to Scott in his letter of 14th February, along with enclosures. "Yr valorous knight no less than Sir Tristram . . . seems to have been well known to Lady Bowes of Daldon [?] near 4 centuries ago. . . . I cannot help thinking that ye good Lady . . . must have met with a Wyclyffe or other English translation & supposed the composition to be somewhat similar in design to our ancient Mysteries & Mummeries whose fabulous speeches & actions were attributed to the Persons in whose existence at least she must have had some faith." He mentions he has found "a little earlier (in ye Register of Bp Langley) 'a Bundle of Reflections against Stephen Broughton the stone Priest of Haltwhistle.'" He then informs him of researches he has made about Border plunder and rapine. The most curious fact he has come across is that "Julius Caesar founded the Parish Church of Chillingham. . . . Of the motives wh led to this extraordinary Act of Piety we shd have been I fear left in ye dark were it not for a nameless Priest of Durham . . . who has written a whole Chapter (of wh however the title far exceeds ye Contents) 'How Jules Cesar Roman Emperour prikked in conscience for the murther of Mark Antiny builded ye Paroche Church of Shillyngham.'" The will of Lady Bowes was published by the Surtees Society in 1835. She bequeaths "j romance boke is called the Gospells . . . unum Romance boke . . . the boke with the knottes . . . unum librum that is called Trystram . . . j blak primer."—*Walpole Collection*.

letter which it inclosed, and which now makes a part of the Appendix to Sir Ralph Sadler. I hope the worthy Knight's Correspondence will be soon before the public, and I will take care that you have an early copy. In the meanwhile, will you have the goodness to accept a copy of the first volume of "Somers's Tracts," with which I have been bothering the public. I have directed it to be left at Rushyford, so your servant will probably find it at the inn.

Your curious investigations will throw material light on the history of the English Borders. I envy your patience & your leisure ; for my own time is occupied at present by a thousand little teasing occupations, which destroy both the habit and inclination to sober research. Pray, may not the romance of Sir Tristram, so simply coupled with the Gospels in the will of Maude Lady Bowes, be the French Book? The metrical legend by itself would, I think have made rather a slender volume.

It is very remarkable how frequently the Catholic Clergy acquired *ex meritis* doubtless the appellation of Stone Priests.¹ You cannot but remember Sir John of Waltham the Stone priest of the Merry Devil of Edmonton— The luminous notices of the foundation of the church of Chillingham serve to correct many errors vulgarly entertained concerning ancient history. I wish it had been more particular in the murder of Mark Anthony, which has been shockingly misrepresented by contemporary historians.

I have considerable hopes of a personal opportunity of thanking you for all your kindness to me, and returning the books and manuscripts of yours which I have in my possession, in the course of next month. I am going to London, and, if perfectly convenient for you and Mrs. Surtees, I am desirous to pass a day at Mainsforth upon our road. I say *our*, because I believe Mrs. Scott will

¹ See *Merry Devil of Edmonton*, ed. H. Walker, Temple Dramatists, p. 77, note: "Compare 'a stone horse' apparently a stallion. Warnke and Proescholdt."

be my fellow-traveller. This plan is not quite arranged because my journey is in the capacity of Clerk to a commission appointed to reform some parts of our judicial proceedings, and consequently my motions depend upon the instructions I receive from the Commissioners.

I have not time at this moment to add more than that I ever am, my dear Sir, Your obliged and faithful,

EDINBURGH, 4th March, 1809.

W. SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

To JOHN MURRAY

EDINBURGH, March 7th, 1809

DEAR SIR,—I safely received your letters for Erskine and myself covering the very handsome recompense of our labours, and also the new poem, and “John de Lancaster.”¹ You need not fear my being courteous with

¹ *John de Lancaster : A Novel*, by Richard Cumberland, is reviewed in the second number in a fairly courteous yet satirical vein. Scott is a little nettled by Cumberland’s boast that he follows nature, and his sneer at the taste for the romantic and unnatural, with an unmistakable allusion to Scott as “the misleader and impostor of the age he lived in.” “By our troth, Mr. Cumberland these be very bitter words. We are no defenders of ghost-seeing and diablerie. That mode of exciting interest ought to be despised as too obvious and too much in vulgar use : but when the appeal is made to nature we must recollect that there are incredibilities in the moral as well as physical world. Whole nations have believed in daemons and witches ; but who ever believed that such a caricatura as Robert de Lancaster ever existed out of the precincts of Bedlam. Mr. Cumberland’s assumed contempt of public applause we cannot but consider as an unworthy affectation. In fact, few men have shewn more eagerness to engross the public favour of which he now grudges his contemporaries their slight and transitory share. His papers have come flying abroad on the wings of the hawks. He has written comedies at which we have cried, and tragedies at which we have laughed : he has composed indecent novels and religious epics. He has pandered to the public lust for personal anecdote, by writing his own life and the private history of his acquaintance

At length he took his muse and dipt her
Full in the middle of the Scripture :
What wonders there the man grown old did,
Sternhold himself he out-Sternholded.”

such a veteran as Cumberland, though he has given me some provocation to use him harshly. General Report here is favourable to us, so far as it has reached my ear ; and if the next number be what I anticipate with pleasure, there is no fear of us. I hope to get at least three capital articles here besides smaller things, and my own lucubrations. The copies sent to Hanover Street have made a very speedy retreat. I am anxiously expecting a summons to London because I hope to be of some use there, and we will talk over all our other plans. I am, dear Sir, Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Smiles*]

TO WILLIAM MILLER *or* JOHN MURRAY ¹

DEAR SIR,—I find since receiving your last letter that I am likely to remain here for a week or two longer than [I e]xpected. Mrs. Clark ² furnishing so much [empl]oyment to your great folks that they have no leisure to look after the Judicature of Scotland. I should be therefore sorry to leave your old plays imperfect & will cheerfully chalk out the 3d. Vol: before my departure should you on the whole think the addition adviseable. I inclose another of Derricks plates that no time may be lost. All of them have verses beneath them which should be engraved on the plate or rather block. Those under the print formerly sent may be supplied from the Somers—Or I will cause Mr. Weber [to] transcribe them. I remain your obedt. Servant

W SCOTT

EDINR. 9th March [1809 ?]

You have never told me whether Somers is likely to do well nor have I heard from Mr. Evans. I have bought

¹ This letter bears no address. It is written to Murray or Miller, for whom, with T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand ; R. H. Evans, Pall Mall ; and J. Harding, St. James Street, the Sadler Papers had been edited.

² Mrs. Clarke, the quondam mistress of the Duke of York. She had received bribes for using her influence with the duke to procure military appointments. The Committee of Inquiry sat from 26th January to 20th March.

some very curious tracts from Blackwoods catalogue & Patons sale to enrich the work. I particularly wish every thing concerning the years 1715 & 1745 to be picked up. The originals shall be taken care of.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—An idea of great consequence has occurred to me which if you can follow out with success it will be of immense use to the Review. But it is of the most delicate nature. You cannot but have heard of that very unfortunate man Dr. Greenshields¹ [*sic*] who for a dishonourable or rather infamous cause was obliged to leave Edinburgh where he was long beloved and admired by every human being. He is I believe in London writing for bread and certainly would be [from a] literary point of view a most important addition to our strength. His principles as to politics are with us and he would in fact be the best or only match whom we could bring against *Playfair* on articles of general philosophy. But could his assistance be obtained it would be of the last importance to conceal it. Even Mr. Gifford I think

¹ The Rev. William Greenfield, D.D., Professor of Rhetoric in Edinburgh University, after he had been degraded for scandalous and vicious conduct (*Scots Magazine*, December 1798), lived in the north of England under an assumed name till his death in 1827. See the Chambers-Wallace Burns (1896), ii. 20. He had been the friend of Burns, who wrote to him a singularly interesting letter, calling him a "Professor of Belles Lettres de la nature; which allow me to say I look upon as an additional merit of yours." In the letter Burns expresses his dislike of patronage and goes on: "I mention this to you once for all, merely in the Confessor's style, to disburthen my conscience, and that, 'when proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,' you may bear me witness, when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood, unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time when the stroke of envious calumny, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph, should dash it to the ground" (1786). In 1809 he published *Essays on the Sources of the Pleasures received from Literary Compositions*, which had a second edition in 1813. Good professors, like good poets, are not always the best of men. It was to Greenfield that Dugald Stewart read Scott's translation from Burger's *Lenore*. See Lockhart (1839), I. 331-2.

need know nothing about it nor in fact any one but yourself. You might give his communications as those of a correspondent who wished his name to be concealed. I will endeavour to get some clue to him unless you know where he is. I conceive he passes by the name of Rutherford.¹ All this I recommend to your prudence. The utility of the alliance may perhaps be overbourned by the unpleasant and disgraceful circumstances attached to the individual. Of course you will easily see the difficulty and delicacy of such a negotiation.

I trouble you with a line to Mr. Miller also to Mr. Gifford and to Heber who lives hard by Elliot's Great Brewery Westminster and not far from James Street of course. Yours truly

W. SCOTT

10 March [1809]

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINR., 13 March [1809]

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I hope to have the honour of seeing you so soon that a very few lines may serve to express the pleasure I feel in your so kindly accepting the verses I sent you. I bring you Mrs. Scott's transcript of which she desires me to request your Ladyship's acceptance saying at the same time all that is pretty & becoming. It will give me very great pleasure to profit by your Ladyship's introduction to Lord Malmesbury & I promise my self infinite satisfaction in looking at the Dorset papers. On Sunday I leave this place for town and before the end of the week I hope to pay my respects to the Marquis which I will take a very early opportunity of doing after I come to town. We have been tearing each other's throats out like our own highland terriers about the Scottish Judicature Bill as the

¹ Should be Richardson.

Ministers are pleased to call it. I was astonished to see to-day in the *Courier* that some officious friend had given a (clumsy enough) report of what I tried to say for my poor old mother the Law of Scotland. The circumstance will not tend to recommend me to those with whom I have unfortunately some official matters to arrange and it was hardly fair to put me into the front of the battle—however I care very little about it I never was gifted with the prudence either of suppressing my feelings or eating my words and I am only sorry they were not more neatly taken down,—Believe me dear Lady Abercorn
Your honoured, humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO ANNA SEWARD

MY DEAR MISS SEWARD,—I have just received your melancholy and alarming letter. I had heard you were far from well, particularly by Mrs. Clephane who had seen you, and in truth I ascribed the intermission of our correspondence to the lassitude arising from indifferent health, and purposed surprizing you by a visit in summer. This I hope and trust is far from being yet impossible, and I will believe that your disorder is of a nature too acute not to have been fatal, if you had not by God's blessing passed the crisis. The very exhaustion which remains after the remedies necessary in such a disease feels like the approach of fate. You must not, my dear friend, give way to these apprehensions, which are often more mortal than the causes which occasion them. Think how much pleasure you have given your friends, and how much more your admirable talents and conversation may afford them. Take heart, therefore, and do not let us lose you, because the shattered state of your nerves after so dreadful a disorder and such severe remedies

disposes you to despondency. I have lost so many friends and have so few left, that I cannot and will not spare one whom I value so highly. I am so little accustomed to make protestations of regard, and in fact so seldom feel much occasion for the regard which should call them forth, that I beg you will excuse every awkwardness of expression, and believe that I shall be really unhappy till I hear that you are better. Believe me, were the poem of Needwood a pig of lead, as it is one of the most beautiful things I ever read, and were the carriage to cost its weight in gold, it would be welcome, if it brought news of your welfare and returning health and spirits.¹ But to ease your anxiety on this score, pray cause it to be inclosed to me under cover to George Hammond Esq. Under Secretary of State, and I will receive it safely by post under the office frank which carries any weight. I need not say how valuable any token of your regard will be to me.

Constable, like many other folks who learn to undervalue the means by which they have risen, has behaved, or rather has suffered his partner to behave, very uncivilly towards me. But they may both live to know that they should not have kicked down their ladder till they were sure of their footing. The very last time I spoke to him on business was about your poems, which he promised faithfully to write about. I understood him to decline your terms, in which I think he acted wrong; but I

¹ Miss Seward had written on 6th March: "I had two reasons for wishing to have written to you sooner; gratitude, and the desire of presenting you with one of the three copies which my poetic friend, Mr. Mundy, has sent me to present to three chosen friends. Though printed, it is not published, and consequently unpurchaseable." In his preface to *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward* (1810), Scott refers to this Mr. Mundy, "the author of two most beautiful poems on Needwood Forest." His full name was Francis Noel Clarke Mundy. *Poems* were issued in 1768. The copy of *Needwood Forest* Scott received was doubtless the privately printed edition [Lichfield, 1776], 4to. [to which are added, *Commendatory Verses . . .* (by) *Erasmus Darwin, M.D., the Elder, Anna Seward, and E. Darwin, the Younger*]. *The Fall of Needwood* appeared in 1808, and both Needwood poems, with other poems, were published in 1830.

had neither influence to change his opinion, nor inclination to interfere with his resolution. He is a very enterprising, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man, but his vanity in some cases overpowers his discretion.

Once more, dear Miss Seward, let me hope that you will be, when this reaches you, easier in body as well as in better spirits, than when yours was despatched. Let Mr. White or your female friend write me two lines to say how you are, but do not I charge you put pen to paper, and believe me yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 19 *March* 1809.

Miss Seward,
The Bishop's Palace, Lichfield.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

MY DEAR SIR,—I have your long & interesting letter—To me who am well acquainted with bookselling phrase it is needless to say that a steady & respectable sale is just better than no sale at all. Here we have been more fortunate.—Ballantyne has only about 30 left of the last 200 received by sea & thinks he could easily have sold double the number forwarded—many announce themselves as steady customers & I have no doubt you may sell 1000 in Scotland quarterly—B. has never had his parcel two days on his hands.

I have written a long & most pressing letter to Mr. Gifford which I hope may have some effect. I see the faults you point out but hardly know how to prevent them at this distance. I think you had better call on Lord Advocate as from yourself & state the necessity of my coming to town. I mention this because it is in his power

to hasten my journey thither on some public business which may otherwise lie over for months—this however you need not hint to him but barely state your request that I have written to you dubiously on the subject of coming up & the advantage my doing so would be to the Review. To me it is quite the same thing whither I come up now or later in the summer but to you it may be very different for I see matters are between the winning & losing. And to say truth it would be an inconvenient crusade in me to come up this month on my own expence when I am sure to be calld up the next on that of the public.

I have found means to get at Mr. G. & have procured a letter to be written to him, which may possibly produce one to you signed Rutherford or Richardson or some such name & dated from the North of England : or if he does not write to you enquiry is to be made whither he would chuse you should address him. The secrecy to be observed in this business must be most profound even to Ballantyne & all the world—if you get articles from him (which will & must draw attention) you must throw out a false scent for enquirers—I believe this unfortunate man will soon be in London.

It is very ill proposed to give Sydney Smiths sermons¹ to Ireland & the thing must not be. I intend to write to Mr. Gifford by post—begging them for Mr. Erskine. He and I know the man and surely will manage the affair best.

Ballantyne gets possession of his shop in a few days—I mean he gets the workmen out of it & enters business with the fairest auspices—prudence & firmness on his part cannot fail to establish him in the first rate in this place. His making a stand is most essential to the Review & all our other plans for every other bookseller here has sunk under the predominating influence of Constables

¹ Sidney Smith's sermons were reviewed in the first number of the *Quarterly*, apparently by Erskine.

house & they literally dare not call their souls their own

[*The last three lines and the signature are cut away.*]

EDINR. 19 March 1809

Just setting out for orders of my sup¹

[*John Murray*]

[*Private*]

TO MR. JOHN MURRAY, BOOKSELLER, FLEET STREET,
LONDON

Postmark : Mar 24 1809

DEAR SIR,—From the Inclosed² you will see our treaty is likely to succeed. I believe Mr. — will soon be in town. Remember his name is *Richardson*. Perhaps you had better write a line to him. Privacy is most essentially necessary to this matter and I think you can devise some false scent which may disguise the contributions beyond the possibility of discovery. Dont mention my name as privy to the transaction, and I believe it will give him particular pain. I am ever Yours truly

W. SCOTT

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

[25th March 1809]

DEAR SIR,—I inclose you another letter from Mr. *Richardson*³—*puisse Richardson il y a*—which will quite prepare you for a meeting with him. His help will be

¹ Murray replied on 24th March, urging Scott to come to London, and offering, "if there be no plea for charging your expenses to Government," to "undertake that the *Review* shall pay them as far as one hundred guineas."

² "The Inclosed" is still preserved with the correspondence. It was an unsigned letter dated "19 March, 1809," in which this mysterious "black knight" of the pen says: "If Mr. Murray writes to me before the 29th he must direct to Mr. Richardson, Corbridge, Newcastle on Tyne."

³ *I.e.* Greenfield.

invaluable but discovery the *very devil*. Mind this—they have no hand in the Edinburgh superior to him in philosophy and Belles lettres—no not a single one.

I think a firm and stable sale will be settled here to the extent of 1000 or 1500 even for the next No. Js: Ballantyne has hardly a copy of his last remittance. Eke I have a letter from Gifford in good spirits.

When do the novels go on?

W. S.

Contrive to be seen as little with Richardson as possible. He is terribly *Kenspeckle*. I observe he will talk bye and bye about terms, and I take the opportunity of begging that your kind intentions towards me (of which Ballantyne informed me) may not interfere with this or any other arrangement. I am quite pleased with my ten guineas a sheet for my labour in writing and for additional exertions I will consider them as overpaid by success in the cause especially while that success is doubtful.

I think Mr. Gifford must be put in the secret about Richardson and shall write to him.

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—I have only time to give a very short answer to your letter. Some very important business detains me here till Monday or Tuesday on the last of which days at farthest I will set off for town & will be with you of course on the end of the week. As to my travelling expences if Government pay me, good & well, if they do not depend on it I will never take a farthing from you. You have my good friend enough of expence to incur in forwarding this great & dubious undertaking & God forbid I should add so unreasonable a charge as your liberality points at. I am very frank in money matters & always take my price when I think I can give money's worth for money but this is quite extravagant & you must think no more of it. Should I want money for any

purpose I will readily make you my banker & give you value in reviews. John Ballantynes last remittance continues to go off briskly—the devils in you in London—you dont know good writing when you get it. All depends on our cutting in before the next Edinr. when instead of our following their lead they shall follow ours. Mrs. Scott is my fellow traveller in virtue of an old promise.

[*Signature cut away.*]

EDINR. 27th March [1809]

4th April—at night

I have been detain'd a day later than I intended but set off tomorrow at midday—I believe I shall get *Frankd* so will have my generosity for nothing. I hope to be in London on Monday.

Mr. John Murray

[*John Murray*]

TO THE REV. HENRY WHITE ¹

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sit down with the deepest sympathy to condole with you on the inexpressible loss ² which we have both sustained in our late excellent and lamented friend. I was in some degree prepared for the blow by a very affecting letter which I had received from her, in which even the handwriting as well as the stile and expressions marked the approach of fate. Yet I struggled, and as it were stilled myself against the idea that her dissolution was so near. She had, I thought, such indifferent health, and the remedies applied had been necessarily attended with such a depressing effect upon an exhausted frame, that I would fain have persuaded

¹ Miss Seward's cousin. In a letter to Southey, 28th October 1807, she describes him as "the Reverend Henry White of Lichfield, a collector of ancient books and tracts."

² Miss Seward died on the 25th of March 1809.

myself of the possibility of her recovery. But how vain are human hopes. I had promised myself so much pleasure from visiting Lichfield this spring, had hoped to find her well, had wished she should have learned to know Mrs. Scott, in short had built a little scheme of two days happiness, in which you, my dear Sir, came in for no small share, so that her sudden death, for such I regard it, comes over me like a dream. I cannot read her last letter, and recollect that her elegant pen and warm feelings were to the last employed in expressing her regard for me, without being most deeply affected.

By a posthumous letter received yesterday, I have a further and most affecting proof of her confidence, as she acquaints me that she has done me the honor to name me her literary executor, and bequeaths me all her works with directions for the mode of publication. I shall be most anxious to have your advice and assistance in managing a trust so sacred and so delicate, and if I possibly can take Lichfield in my way from London, I will do so in order to have the advantage of personal communication on the subject. The visit will be very different from what I had promised. I leave this place for London in the beginning of next week ; if you will have the goodness to address to me under cover to George Hammond Esq, Whitehall, London, I will get your letter safe. Adieu, my dear Sir, you have sustained an inexpressible loss in your accomplished and high-minded friend, but you have that comfort which religion and philosophy hold out to their votaries.

Believe me in sorrow or joy yours ever truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 31st March, 1809.

I have written to Mr. Simpson Miss Seward's Executor, and requested that no one may see the Manuscripts bequeathed to me unless you should wish to look over them. As I intend to send Mr. Simpson a copy of Miss

Seward's posthumous letter, I cannot send off my letter till I get a frank.—

The Revd. Henry White,
Close, Lichfield.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MISS MILLAR ¹

NO 6 HALF MOON STREET
PICCADILLY *Saturday* [April 1809]

DEAR MISS MILLAR,—Your kind favour and that of your little friends came safe and gave us great pleasure. We arrived here safe on Monday last after a rapid and fatiguing journey but found so much to do before we could settle ourselves in a comfortable way that neither Mrs. S. nor I had time to write— I hope you all continue well and that the little folks continue to give you satisfaction which I consider as the best news I can receive and therefore beg you will have the goodness to write without minding the irregularity of my answers— Mrs. S. joins in best love to you and your little charge—also to my mother and the Miss Rutherfords. The Major sets out for Edinr. on Monday first—Believe me very sincerely
Your obliged humble Servant WALTER SCOTT

Any letters may be sent as formerly under cover to Mr Hammond but if you have no inclosures to send single letters may be addressed to my lodgings here.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOHN MURRAY

[April 1809]

DEAR SIR,—You cannot I think possibly dispense with seeing Mr. Richardson which as he is a perfect stranger

¹ Miss Millar was the governess to Scott's children. See *Letters*, . . . written by Members of Sir W. S.'s family to their Old Governess, ed., with introduction and note, by the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. London, 1905.

to you may be done without the least awkwardness. You will of course apprise him of your intention to meet him. Frequent meetings might give rise to suspicion, therefore be as explicit and full in communication as to make them unnecessary.

Ld. Advocate has promised to speak to Mr. Croker about the D. of G's article ; but if he is unsuccessful I would sound Mr. R. who will do it as well as it can be done ; you will of course explain to him, the tone to be used, in case he is willing to attempt it.

I will be very glad to see you tomorrow morning. Rose and Heber are to be with me. Yours truly

W. S.

6 HALFMOON STREET *Friday*

I cannot add to your list and it would be a pity to retrench as the more Mr. R. has to chuse upon the better. Be cautious of saying much about the Review to our friends the Thomsons who are not quite with us.

I remember my Monday's engagement of course.

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

TO MRS CLEPHANE

HALF MOON STREET [*April or May 1809*]

ON my return home before dinner, finding I had half an hour good, I employed it in an attempt to versify the Macleans' song. No English Rythm would suit the structure of the original, so I fear singing the lines at last to its own tune, is out of the question. However though the verses have this fault, besides being but indifferent otherwise, I hope, my dear Madam, the young ladies and you, will accept my attempt, as a trifling expression of my respect for the Clan, and my gratitude for the high pleasure I have received in your society particularly.

W. S.

WAR-SONG OF THE MACLEANS ¹
IMITATED FROM THE GAELIC.

I.

A weary month has wandered o'er
Since last we parted on the shore ;
Heaven ! that I saw thee, Love, once more,
Safe on that shore again.
'Twas bold Sir Lachlan gave the word,
Lachlan of many a galley Lord
He called his kindred bands on board
And launch'd them on the main.

II.

Clan Gillian is to battle gone,
Clan Gillian fierce in foray known,
Rejoicing in the glory won
In many a former broil.
Full far is heard the thundering fray
The rout, the ruin, the dismay
When from the twilight glens away
Clan Gillian drives the spoil.

III.

Woe to the hills that shall rebound,
The bannered bag-pipes maddening sound,
Clangillian's onset roaring round,
Shall shake their inmost cell.
And woe to him who stops to gaze
Where Lachlan's silken streamer plays ;
The fool might brave the lightening blaze
As wisely and as well.

[*Northampton*]

¹ This song is dated 1815 in the printed editions of Scott's poems.
Stanza I, line 5, runs there :

'Twas valiant Lachlan gave the word.

Stanza III, line 5, runs there :

Woe to the bark whose crew shall gaze.

TO MRS. HUGHES

MY DEAR MRS. HUGHES,—Ten thousand thanks for Mr. Atwood's Glee¹ and the kind expressions which make your attention more valuable. I do now perfectly remember that either one or two copies reached me through Mr. Longman's house but as they reached us at our farm we had no means of ascertaining their merit which I understand stands high among all judges. They were borrowed of me by a musical friend and never returned. Will you be so good as to make my best compliments to Mr. Atwood & at once thank him for the personal attention of sending me the copies and for thinking the poetry at all worthy of his beautiful music.

Believe me my dear Madam that the first time I return to London it will give me the greatest pleasure to avail myself of your permission to visit Amen Corner and tire your goodness with my demands on your musical powers. I am with great respect and regard
Your very faithful
humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

BURY STREET 4th May [1809]

[*Gabriel Wells*]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

6 HALF MOON STREET 1809

MY DEAR MRS. CLEPHANE,—I have been longing for your return to shew you a M.S. play of Miss Baillie on the tale of Lady's Rock— Yet I should hardly venture, did I not hope that English air might mitigate some of your clannish feeling, for assuredly the Maclean's play the second part in the Drama.

I am so tired of being a tetotum, or turnstile, in fine rooms, turned round by fine people, that upon much

¹ "In Peace Love Tunes the Shepherd's Reed," which Thomas Attwood (1765-1838) had set to music.

slighter temptation I would like of all things to come to my tea in Clarges Street, tomorrow (friday) evening at seven, and shew you this drama, which may (with music between the acts) occupy us till past ten. I have promised to do my possible to bring it out at Edinburgh, and have no doubt of its success, but I wish to consult you about a "commodity of good names" for the chieftain introduced, for Miss Baillie has not been fortunate in that particular. Charlotte will come with me, if possible, but she has some duty to perform in the way of visiting, from which I shall claim exemption.

I don't wonder at your liking Lady Hood, any more than at her being delighted with you, for when I say you are formed to please each other, I make no slight compliment, though a true one to both.

With my best love, (surely I am old enough to send it) to the young ladies.

I am ever yours most truly and respectfully

W. S.

[*Northampton*]

TO MISS WHITE

[1809]

MY DEAR MISS WHITE,—I am half out of charity with you for supposing I had an unpleasant evening at your house—for first it was *your* house and besides the company was without a single exception that which I would have selected at my own as highly agreeable. You surely do not think me goose enough to be vexed at Jeffrey's review. If I were conscious of having a single fibre that would vibrate on such a subject I would never write a line in my life for peace of mind is better than either poems or reviews. But I can amuse myself with blowing my soap bubble like a great boy as I am & be totally indifferent whether it is puffed about or burst after I have launched it. As I by no means delight either in talking of my verses or even in hearing them praised censure especially

friendly censure gives me no uneasiness whatever nor would I forfeit the regard of a learned and ingenious friend for all the poems & criticisms in the world.

Will you make my grateful respects acceptable to the Bishop & thank him for his hospitable & cordial invitation which I hope one day to profit by, but not this season. Be so kind also as to assure the fair Advocate for Lord Spencer's fame that he has not in England a more sincere Admirer than I am on account of his character both as a statesman & a politician nor do I doubt in the least his great share in our splendid naval successes. I had also particular marks of his Lordship's personal civility upon rather an important occasion so that I should be inexcusable had I willingly omitted any marks of respect due to him. But the Prime Minister like the Commander in Chief is naturally entitled to the praise of what is achieved by those with whom he acts—Besides Lord Spencer is alive & Mr. Pitt is dead—very good reasons for rendering tribute to the one & perhaps also for suspending what is due to the other. I hope Earl Spencer will render his country many an important service ere the strain of praise shall be raised with equal propriety in his behalf. I am dear Miss White with best thanks for all your kindness Yours most respectfully

W. S.

[*Mrs. Williams*]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

[1809]

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—I am truly sorry I have not seen your Ladyship before my departure northward which I expect and trust will take place on Tuesday or Wednesday at farthest. I quite agree with your observation on the play¹ which I intend to state to Miss Baillie

¹ *The Family Legend*. The play had been read to Lady Louisa Stuart and others by Miss Barry at her house. She had written to Scott praising and criticising the play. See the letter to Joanna Baillie on p. 196.

with all your Ladyships arguments and what force I can add to it. The character of Maclean also is rather feebly drawn. It occurs to me that a touch or two might be thrown in to exasperate his jealousy of Argyle from Lornes private visit to Mull—That suspicion of his wife's affection to De Grey might be also insinuated. Lastly that his tempters might work upon the pride peculiar to weak minds, their jealousy of being supposed to be directed by the domestic influence of a more able partner—Miss Baillie answered generally to these objections that we did not see upon the stage the whole process of Macleans perversion. But this is obviously no argument because the audience will never *suppose* circumstances and conversations which are not presented to them or even rehearsed historically by any person in the Drama.

I hope she will be prevailed upon to finish this brilliant sketch which will probably be the most successful play of modern times if she will but bestow a little pains on it—

My kind respects attend Lord Montagu and his Lady—I will be greatly obliged to his Lordship for the loan of the Miscellanies of which I will take great care and return them in safety—I hope dear Lady Louisa that when you come to Scotland you will let us know your motions. Nothing would give us more pride and pleasure than to show you any thing that is to be seen in our land of heath and mountain. I ever am your Ladyships Very faithful

WALTER SCOTT

HALF MOON STREET *Sunday*

I will not forget your remembrance at Rokeby.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LONDON, 4th May [1809]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—Though I have been silent since I heard from you I have as the philosophical parrot said

“thought not the less.” A pressure of business chiefly professional has sent me up to this town where I found the bearer of this letter the younger Ballantyne of Edinburgh. I am not so well acquainted with him as with his brother but enough to introduce him to you as an active and intelligent young man very likely to make as great figure in the publishing trade as his brother does in the printing. He has been highly countenanced by all the booksellers of credit here especially by your friends in the Row.¹ His chief purpose of calling upon you is to talk over the plan at which you hinted of a “British Librarian” to be published periodically. The *Censura* is immediately to be given up and Longman & Co. are to have some concern in this new work which is however to be managed in Edinburgh. I think with you there is ample room for such a work and that if conducted by you it would have great interest and suit both readers, booksellers and editors. Indeed I think smaller tracts which have an interest independent of their scarcity or antiquity ought to be reprinted at length so that the miscellany might in some respects be a continuation of the Harleian, on a better plan. Should this plan be adopted a quarto size will be preferable to 8vo because it holds more. One vol. or even two might be published yearly. I will in this or any undertaking in which I am at all qualified to assist hold your back-hand with great pleasure, and I am sure that in points of the lucre of Mammon the Ballantynes are disposed to be highly liberal. The title of such a work would be matter of serious consideration but as I trust we shall speedily meet we might beat our brains about that at leisure.

I hope to leave this place in about ten days so pray let me know whether I shall find you disposed to come on with us to Edinh. There is nobody with me but Mrs.

¹ “In the course of February, Mr. John Ballantyne had proceeded to London, for the purpose of introducing himself to the chief publishers there in his new capacity, and especially of taking Mr. Murray’s instructions respecting the Scotch management of the *Quarterly Review*.”—LOCKHART.

Scott. If you are unshaken in your resolution I will take my homeward route by Keswick and we will take our northward flight together ; as my stay here has been long I fear even the lake must not tempt me to stay above one night in its vicinity—So that I doubt I shall not even see Wordsworth whom I would go some few miles to see at any time.

Everybody is delighted with your Missionary review.¹

The Quarterly has taken root and will thrive.

Ever dear Southey yours most truly

WALTER SCOTT

4th May [1809]

NO. 6. HALF MOON STREET, PICCADILLY, LONDON.

Pray write by return of post and dont disappoint me in my hopes of carrying you to Edinburgh.

[*Brotherton*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[P.M. 13 June 1809]

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I cannot resist transmitting you the enclosed both because I think the general applause of my friend Lady Louisa Stuart is very valuable and because I think the criticism it contains is at least plausible.² We think of setting off on Wednesday and so soon as I shall reach Edinburgh I will have a confab: with H. Siddons. I have got from Mrs. Maclean a

¹ This letter, printed from the Brotherton collection, is here complete. A sentence or two are in *Lockhart* and a portion in Southey's *Life and Correspondence*. Southey's article, "Transactions of the Missionary Society in the South Sea Islands," appeared in the August-November number 1809.

² See previous letter to Lady Louisa Stuart. Joanna acknowledges this letter on 23rd June : " I hope this will find you well after your journey. . . . I thank you very heartily for the kind, friendly note I received from you before you left London," and she thanks him for Mrs. Maclean's help and for Lady Louisa Stuart's note. She concludes by saying there is another gentleman she wishes to read the play, " both from the opinion I have of his taste, and because I feel that I owe him this attention, viz. Mr. Mackenzie the Man of Feeling."—*Walpole Collection*.

drawing of the ancient dress of an Highland Lady—also the colours of the tartans worn by the Macleans and Campbells which contrast strongly and mark the different parties on the stage. Mrs. S. sends her best love and I am with unfeigned respect truly yours

W. S.

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY ¹

LONDON, 14th June 1809

My unaccountable silence must have surprised you but my motions depending on other people I have been kept till this day under a state of total uncertainty when I should be permitted to leave London. To-day I have at length received permission to shake the dust from my feet against this precious city and to-morrow I hope to set forward. Sunday and Monday I intend to spend at Rokeby park near Greta Bridge with my friend Morritt and on Tuesday I resume my journey.

Now if I thought there was hope of carrying you on with us to Edinburgh I would be at Keswick on Tuesday night for certain, and as there is no one but Mrs. Scott and I we could have the pleasure of your company in the snuggest way possible. But if this confounded visitor of yours (I beg his pardon) has really arrived so *mal à propos* as to interrupt all prospect of what I have

¹ Southey replies to this letter on 16th June regretting it is impossible "that I can now accompany you to Edinburgh." . . . "My father's elder brother was worth £40,000 but he cut me off without the slightest cause of offence." . . . "I have neither the habits nor talents for an official situation. . . . I have said to Wynn that one thing would make me at ease for life—'create for me the title of Royal Historiographer for England (there is one for Scotland) with a salary of 400£' the deductions would leave a nett income of 278. With that I should be sure of all the decent comforts of life. . . . Whether Mr. Canning can do this I know not, but if this could be done it would be adequate to all I want & beyond that my wishes have never extended."—*Walpole Collection*. About three months later Canning and Castlereagh fought a duel, and they with the Duke of Portland retired from the Ministry. See note, p. 248.

so much at heart I fear I must proceed by Penrith to Carlisle without leaving the great road ; for as I could only stay a night at Keswick, my presence in Edinr. being more than needful, it would hardly be worth while to make a detour for so very short a visit. Pray write to me by return of post, addressd care of *John Bacon Morritt Esqre. Rokeby park Greta Bridge* which will decide my motions. If, as I would fain flatter myself we are destined to meet I have much to say to you about the *Quarterly Review*, *Rhadamanthus*, etc. etc. I do not apprehend there is any great risque of our politics differing where there are so many strings in unison, but it may doubtless happen. Meanwhile every one is grateful for your curious and invaluable articles. And this leads to a subject which I would rather have spoken than written upon, but the doubt of seeing you obliges me to touch on it. George Ellis and I have both seen a strong desire in Mr. Canning to be of service to you in any way within his power that could be pointed out, and this without any reference to political opinions. An official situation in his own department was vacant, and I believe is still so. This he meant to offer you, but it occurred to Geo. Ellis and me that the salary, £300, was inadequate for an office occupying much time and inferring constant attendance. But there are professors chairs both in England and Scotland frequently vacant, and there is hardly one, unless such as are absolutely professional, for which you are not either fitted already, or capable of making yourself so, on short notice. There are, besides, diplomatic and other situations, should you prefer them to the groves of Academe. In short, I think you will be unjust to yourself and your family if you neglect to avail yourself of an opportunity of becoming a little more independent of the Row, which has been rarely so handsomely presented to any literary character. Mr. Canning's opportunities to serve you will soon be numerous or they will be gone altogether for he is of a

different mould from some of his colleagues and a decided foe to these half measures which I know you detest as much as I do. It is not his fault that the cause of Spain is not at this moment triumphant ; this I know, and there will come a time when the world will know it too. Meanwhile all this is strictly confidential. Think over the thing in your own mind, and let [it] if possible determine you on your northern journey. What would I not give to secure you a chair in our Northern Metropolis. We will talk the matter over together and I will regulate anything I should write to Geo. Ellis upon your wishes as he enjoys Mr. Canning's entire confidence. I ought in conscience to have made ten thousand pretty detours about all this and paid some glowing compliments both to the Minister and the Bard. But they may be all summed up by saying in one sober word that Mr. C. could not have entertained a thought more honourable to himself and knowing him as I do I must add more honourable and flattering to your genius and learning.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest compliments to Mrs. Southey.—Remember me kindly to Wordsworth if within reach and believe me ever yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO THE REV. E. BERWICK, ESCHOR, LEIXLIP, IRELAND ¹

SIR,—I should hardly know how to apologize for the extraordinary liberty I am about to make use of did I not

¹ Edward Berwick (born 1750), after an interesting career at Trinity College, where he was expelled by the Provost and replaced by the Visitor, took orders and was presented by Bishop Percy to the living of Tullylish, whence he was transferred by the Earl of Moira to Leixlip, county Dublin, and to the Rectory of Clongish, County Longford. He published the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* in 1810 (reviewed in the *Quarterly*) and other works. He gave Scott extensive help in editing Swift, and when in a review of that work Jeffrey fell foul of Swift's character he wrote an anonymous defence. See later.

hope that the cause in which I am engaged as well as the kind intercession of my friend Miss White has prepared you for so great an intrusion— She assures me however that you will be best pleased to pardon an unceremonious display of my wants and of my ignorance, so like a true beggar I will bluntly prefer them as the best apology for interrupting your Leisure.

I need hardly say that my request refers to my proposed edition of Swift on which I have bestowed a good deal of time and pains yet find myself very, very far from attaining the perfect and intimate acquaintance with the history of that eminent and delightful classic which is necessary to the elucidation of his Works particularly those which are satirical. In those pieces which are connected with Oxfords administration I am tolerably perfect, as I have taken pains to make myself intimate both with the general and minute history of that interesting period. I have dipd deep even into the dirty stream of scurrility by which Swift and his friend Pope were assailed during their lives and recovered at the expense of some research and trouble a good many of the precious tomes of the egregious Mr. Curl and his associates. Yet the knowledge I have procured only shews me how far I am from the goal of my enterprize. Now I am informed that Mr. Berwick has bestowed that attention upon Swifts works with which a man of genius delights to illustrate the labours of a favourite author and that he is not unwilling to extend his hand to guide me through the labyrinth in which I am involved.

The life of Swift although the facts have never I think been placed in a regular point of view does not afford much matter for controversy yet the following queries have amongst others occurred to me. Are there any better reasons than Dr. Burrell has alleged for fixing on Swift the oration of the Terrae filius¹ for which the orator

¹ Scott discusses this question in his article in the *Quarterly* on the Rev. John Barnett's *Essay on the earlier part of the Life of Swift*, 1808.

was expelled? If not I think the internal evidence very feeble and the external by no means preponderating. Tisdal the continuator of Rapin says that on the death of Queen Anne and the succession of George 1st a letter was intercepted directed to Swift containing treasonable correspondence with Ormond in consequence of which Swift for a time absconded. Now we know that Swift retired to the Country six weeks before the Queen's death to avoid witnessing the discord of Oxford & Bolingbroke and went to take possession of his Deanery. Has Tisdals story any better foundation than this temporary retirement. I have two little pieces called Dr. Swifts diary not without humour & obviously written by one minutely acquainted with his private habits that were hawked about the street at this time. They are written with all the malignity of party zeal. The causes of Swifts ambiguous conduct towards Stella is a terrible stumbling block. Dr. Delany as I learn from his daughter was persuaded that it arose from a suspicion if not a discovery of their consanguinity. Yet his authority though so highly respectable is not conclusive. What is Mr. Berwicks opinion? many other queries crowd to my pen but I would gladly be assured of your counsel and support before further engrossing your time.

The writings of Swift as well as his life afford passages to embroil a commentator. The arrangement for example of the different parts of Cadenus & Vanessa has been often altered and I think always for the worse. The Legion Club and those smaller pieces which are devoted to Irish politics would require many elucidations which I can only hope to procure by mendicating assistance among those of the Irish literati who may think my attempt deserving of it. I do not intend to confine myself to epistolary solicitation but if it please God to give me life and health next year I hope to profit by personal solicitation. But I have already encroached too far for an utter stranger. My bluntness will at least

have this advantage that you will be fully entitled to refuse me my boon as flatly as I have asked it. I trust however that your answer may be more propitious in which hope I have the honour to subscribe myself Sir—your most obedient—very humble servant—

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK—NORTH BRITAIN—

It may be necessary to assure you that my task is undertaken in the spirit of zealous admiration of Swift both as a writer and as a man. I know there is a modern fashion in virtue of which an Editor and Biographer endeavours to raise himself by depreciating the subject of his labours. But far from desiring to climb upon the shoulders of the Dean I am reverentially ambitious of supporting his train.

Post Mark *July* 1809

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I have your two letters¹ and feel the value of the confidence you repose in me. I have written fully and anxiously to Ellis upon the subjects contain'd but I own I have no hopes as to the Historiographers situation. The charge of the creation of new offices has been so often bandied from one party to the other that the present Ministers and Mr. Percival in particular would hardly upon any account however justifiable (and yours is highly so) expose themselves to reflections of this nature. But I think it highly probable that something may be done in the Derwentwater business. If the appointment is thought to be

¹ That of 16th June referred to above and one of 6th July, in which Southey tells him that the Stewardship for the Derwentwater Estates " (belonging to Greenwich Hospital) is expected soon to be vacant " and would be a desirable post and source of income. He is to write for the fourth number (*Q.R.*) a paper on " Methodism," and he has an English eclogue which Ballantyne might have for the *Edinburgh Annual Register* or the *English Minstrelsy*.

“too good” as you call it I dare say some mode of cutting a good slice out of it can easily be devised. Ellis will I know do all that man can do and I am confident that Canning will not be wanting. I wish to God they would make you Lord of the Lake and the Cairn. You could not do a kinder or more acceptable service to all Freres friends than by undertaking the article you allude to. The Methodists will also I think do excellently. Public affairs do indeed begin to look up. The sulky retinue of the Bulletins particularly of late gives me very considerable hopes. But before a decisive blow can be struck there must be a strong force in the rear of Bonaparte to cut off his communication between France and Holland. Such a force being cover’d on the right by the Tyrolese insurrection would seal hermetically the passage against his reinforcements. I would to God our expedition was off and begin to fear that English men as well as Scotch are *wise behind the hand*. I think it is clear the Arch Duke John has drubbed Eugene and crossed the Danube triumphantly at Comon so that all the Austrian force may concentrate itself upon the North Bank of the Danube. I have requested Ballantyne to send to Carlisle the 2d. vol of Somers—what a curious work might have been made of the Harleian and Somers collections blended with you and I as editors. The 2d. vol of Somers has suffered somewhat by my absence in London. Ballantyne will be duly gratified for the Eclogue and so shall I as his protector. Are you not delighted with the spirit displayed by the Spaniards in their petite guerre which becomes every day more wasting and more fatal to the invaders. I am informed that the French Generals in that country have quarrel’d among themselves. From a letter from a young officer of cavalry who was for[e]most in the pursuit of Soult I learn that the disasters of his retreat have in part attoned for that upon Corunna. At one defile where they had to pass in the night a bridge without ledge or parapet the

chasm beneath was filled with the bodies of men and horses jostled over in the hurry of passing.

Is there no hope of our meeting soon? and before I conclude have you any interest or access to interest with the present Lord Lonsdale. I should think he is likely to be listened to in the appointment upon the Derwent-water estate at any rate his countenance would be of great consequence. I hope to see Lord Melville and might contrive to assail Lord Lonsdale from that quarter or by means of Lady Louisa Stuart. But I will wait to hear whether Canning approves. Ever yours most truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 8th July 1809

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

EDINBURGH, July 8, 1809

MY DEAR ELLIS,—We reached home about a fortnight ago, having lingered a little while at Rokeby Park, the seat of our friend Morritt, and one of the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen, torrent, and copse, which dignifies our northern scenery. The Greta and Tees, two most beautiful and rapid rivers, join their currents in the demesne. The banks of the Tees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the glen of Roslin, so much and justly admired. The Greta is the scene of a comic romance,¹ of which I think I remember giving you the outline. It concerns the history of a “Felon Sowe,”—

“Which won’d in Rokeby wood,
Ran endlong Greta side,”

bestowed by Ralph of Rokeby on the freres of Richmond—and the misadventures of the holy fathers in their

¹ Scott printed this ballad in the notes to *Rokeby*—Note 52, *The Felon Sow*.

awkward attempts to catch this intractable animal. We had the pleasure to find all our little folks well, and are now on the point of shifting quarters to Ashestiel. I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of poor old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed. He is of high pedigree, and was procured with great difficulty by the kindness of Miss Dunlop of Dunlop ; so I have christened him Wallace, as the donor is a descendant of the Guardian of Scotland. Having given you all this curious and valuable information about my own affairs, let me call your attention to the enclosed, which was in fact the principal cause of my immediately troubling you. . . .¹

[*Lockhart*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I am just favoured with yours. I have not and indeed cannot have heard from London on the most important part of your letter. But I hope to hear daily. I am anxious your application to Lord Lonsdale should not be forstall'd by some more active solicitor and submit to you how far you ought not to occupy that quarter as soon as possible. A late application might appear disrespectful and your grounds of preferring a request are so open and so honourable to yourself you should have no hesitation to state them. Lord Mellville has been very unwell otherwise I should ere this have been with him in the Highlands upon some other business and would have felt my way upon yours. Sir George Beaumont would be an excellent channel. The M. of Bute differs from Lord Lonsdale in politics in other respects they are I believe friends. I am delighted to hear you are making any progress to complete Kehama. It may be of some consequence to you to

¹ The enclosure referred to the private affairs of Southey, in whose favour Scott had for some time been strenuously using his interest.

token of liberality with which I presented him upon your part. It was equally unexpected and acceptable, and I have no doubt will stimulate him to every possible exertion in behalf of the work. I have at length got safe in to this little corner, and begin to look back upon all the gaiety of the spring as a sort of dazzling and confused dream. But what I shall always remember as a pleasing reality is your ladyship's kind and flattering attention to Charlotte and myself, for which all we can offer is our grateful thanks and constant recollection. I have been daily with Colin Mackenzie since my return, and am happy to say I never saw him looking so well, not, at least, for many years. I have just written a long letter to Lady Hood, whom I suppose Sir Samuel's departure will determine northwards, in which case I hope we may have the honour to see her at these goat-whey quarters as she passes.¹

Mrs. Scott joins in offering her most respectful compliments to your ladyship and the marquis, and I am ever, dear lady marchioness, your much obliged and truly respectful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 21 *July* 1809.

The most noble Lady Stafford.

[*The Sutherland Book*]

In 1804 the countess formed the acquaintance of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, in whose correspondence she figures largely, and in 1809 or earlier became one of Scott's friends. It is clear from this letter that she had entertained the Scotts, probably at Cleveland House, during their visit to London in the spring and early summer. The Journals bear repeated witness to their acquaintance whenever Scott was in London.

¹ Morritt had written to Scott on the 17th: "Lady Louisa Stuart is with us to our great pleasure, she is in her progress to Bothwell. We have not heard of Lady Hood coming North, tho' as Sir S. is going on the Expedition we live in hopes, as it is so early in the Summer she can scarce live near London the whole of the time till next winter." Numerous letters from Lady Hood are in the Walpole Collection, but we have found none of Scott's letters to her.

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

As I find you are now at Rokeby¹ on your way to Bothwell will your Ladyship permit me to remind you that whether you seek Clydesdale by Peebles or by Edinburgh you must necessarily pass within a mile of this small farm which will without pretending to any great matters rather furnish a better *gîte* than any of the Inns on the road ; and the reckoning shall be that your Ladyship puts up with your hard quarters for a day or two and honour some of our wonders with a visit. I feel myself so assured that you will honour us so far that I will give you the *carte du pais*.

If your Ladyship leaves Rokeby without making any visit in Cumberland two days' easy travelling will bring your post-chaise to Ashestiel on the second evening. It is seven miles from Selkirk and just so far on the road either to Edinburgh or to Bothwell. Elibank Castle has a claim on your Ladyship for the honour you have already done to the tale of Walter of Harden's wedding. Newark and the braes of Yarrow are also worth seeing even if the last were not classical ground in Scottish song. There is very little or rather no chance of our being from home but to make assurance double sure a note addressed Ashestiel by Selkirk will apprise us when your Ladyship can grant our request. I need not, I am sure, say that Charlotte joins her respectful solicitations to mine as well as in best love to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt. Believe me with the greatest respect dear Lady Louisa Your Ladyship's much obliged most faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, BY SELKIRK 22d July 1809.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ Lady Louisa replied on the 26th regretting that she must push straight on to Bothwell Castle and telling with what joy she has heard of the birth of Lady Dalkeith's son, and Lady Frances Douglas adds a note how she wishes Lady Louisa "to come for once while Bothwell was in its summer dress and before our *Rose Harvest* was entirely over."—Will the Scotts not come to Bothwell?

To JOHN B. MORRITT

YOUR letter my dear Morrith reached me just as I was relieved of the load of business which had been accumulating during my absence in London, & which though as Johnson said when I set myself doggedly to it I can work as hard as any man well nigh stund and overwhelmd me. I have however wrought my way hitherward and honest Christian in the pilgrims progress never felt more relieved when his burthen dropd from him and rolld into the sepulchre than I do at this moment. I need not say how warmly Charlotte and I recollect all the hospitality of Portland place and Rokeby. It is a cruel thing that there is more than a days journey between us for that would be easily dashd through. Yet the distance cannot be immense for we dind here at three o'clock the day after we left Rokeby so that assuredly it ought to be no unsurmountable bar to our meeting again.

I am much surprized at the rejection of your excellent article on Warburton but a good deal happend when I was in London to shew me that Gifford wants much of that tact which is necessary to conduct with spirit the work he has undertaken. It was with some difficulty that Ellis and I prevaild for the admission of the Austrian article¹ that saved the last number. There is a lame [tame?] and cowardly caution which prepares all the world for the defeat of the combatant who exhibits such a suspicious symptom. When the sword was once drawn I would have hurld the scabbard into Thames. But I was not held worthy to advise at least not listend to upon that

¹ The article on *Austrian State Papers* in the first number, written or inspired by Canning. It is a survey of Napoleon's career, and an appeal to the country not to yield to discouragement: "To confine ourselves to a partial and gloomy view can never be wise. A nation may be ruined by despair; it cannot be much injured by hope." This is the spirit in which the review was founded, to combat the defeatism of the *Edinburgh*. But Morrith's article was rejected on the ground that the *Edinburgh* should not be expressly mentioned.

topic. I will I think write once more and very fully to Gifford but it shall be for the last time. Not that I will withdraw my own feeble assistance while a limb of the thing sticks together but I will not subject myself to give my friends the trouble of labouring in vain. All Gifford's excellent talent and no less excellent principle will do little to save the Review unless he will adopt a more decisive tone [turn?] of warfare and greater energy in his mode of conducting it.¹ It is a thousand pities and I could gnaw my nails off to see so excellent a design miscarry but what can be done. I have not had a line either from Gifford or the Bookseller since I came down and as it is vulgarly said that profferd service is of an evil savour sure am I that profferd advice is still less to be endured by human nostrils. After all I believe the best way will be to advise with George Ellis whose judgement and knowlege of mankind may find a remedy where perhaps I should only aggravate the evil.

Would to heaven that you were here or I were at Rokeby on this numerical summers day. Ashestiel never lookd so enchanting—the ground is quite enameld with wild flowers and all living things in such high spirits as to withdraw one involuntarily from thinking of all warfare and foemen even from Bonaparte down to the Edinburgh Reviewers. I suppose it is now pretty distinctly understood that our expedition at least the greater part of it is intended for Flushing. The secret has however been pretty well kept no usual thing in our expeditions.

And now dear Morritt let me claim from you your promise that I should have the Highland tale² for my next edition of the Minstrelsy. It is going to press in a

¹ Morritt had written (17th July) : " If the batting is now to be withdrawn I shd fear the new review will gradually sink into the solemn nothingness of our predecessors in the British Critical and in a few more numbers may be consigned to the vault of the Capulets, unless you have interest enough to put a little more of your own spirit into their sleepy hostility."

² See note, p. 224.

few days but as of course you will be placed among the imitations you may take your own time for transcription and correction. I wish you would also give me a sonnet for a certain pocket selection or Minstrelsy which I pickd out for my friend Ballantyne. I think you will like the choice of the ancient things and I wanted to add a few modern pieces *hactenus inedita*. I intend to give him two or three trifles of my own and to exercise all the interest I possess among my poetical friends. The work will make two beautifully printed pocket volumes.

I have written a few lines to Lady Louisa to beg she will look in upon Ashestiel in her journey to Bothwell. Do pray say the best you can for us—we lie alike in the way.

Charlotte joins in kindest & best love to Mrs. and Miss Morritt. I have not forgotten my promise about the pirates ditty though I have not yet had time enough to write it out. I hope Lady Hood if she goes north will come by Ashestiel. Believe me dear Morritt ever yours in faith and sincerity while

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL SELKIRK 22 July [1809]

[Law]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Sunday 7th Augt. [1809]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—The contents of your letter¹ gave me great pleasure. No person can or ought to have greater influence with the present government than Lord Lonsdale both from his high character extensive influence & uniform attachment. I have therefore great

¹ This letter of 3rd August intimated Lord Lonsdale's readiness to support Southey's application for the Stewardship of the Derwentwater estates. On the 6th August Southey writes that it is off. He has not the necessary qualifications. Also there is an Historiographer—old Dutens at £406 a year. He will do his best for the Ballantynes. He refers to Lord Byron's waggery. Scott's letter or Southey's is misdated, for it is to *this* letter of 7th August that Southey is replying on 6th August and to Southey's letter Scott replies on the 10th of September. Probably the date of Southey's letter should be 16th August.

hope that an application from him or favoured by him concerning a thing lying at his door cannot possibly be overlooked. I have written to Ellis by this post to acquaint him with this reinforcement & to beg him to put out every oar he can think of. I think also of writing to William Rose a brother of the black letter & who I know would be extremely happy to lend his aid. The father is at present Treasurer of the Navy & may have something to say in the appointment, but I delay applying till I hear from Ellis whether it will be of service for a multiplication of unnecessary applications very often prejudices the cause they are intended to serve. Should you be destined Knight of the Quest you will owe your success entirely to your own high character & if I have acted as a flapper to induce you successfully to avail yourself of it I shall think the better of my own meddling disposition as long as I live. I must in the multiplicity of Canning's engagements trust to Ellis to choose the *tempora fundi* but I have written besides to which however I have not desired & don't expect an immediate reply.

I believe the Ballantynes have written to you about undertaking a portion of the historical part of their Register, embracing the war in Spain and I most sincerely hope you will find it convenient to comply with their request. You are ready primed and loaded & it would give me particular delight were you to turn your ordinance into this direction about which I am for various reasons very solicitous. I think I heard that Ellis was doing something about Spanish affairs for the Review.

By the way is your ancient Seneschal whose decease is to open our Quest thinking of a better world. I only ask because about three years ago I accepted the office I hold in the court of Session the revenue being to accrue to me only upon decease of the old Incumbent. . . . But my friend has since taken out a new lease of life, and unless I get some Border lad to cut his throat, may,

for aught I know, live as long as I shall ;—such odious deceivers are these invalids. Mine reminds me of Sindbad's Old Man of the Sea, and will certainly throttle me if I can't somehow dismount him. If I were once in possession of my reversionary income, I would, like you, bid farewell to the drudgery of literature, and do nothing but what I pleased, which might be another phrase for doing very little. I was always an admirer of the modest wish of a retainer¹ in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays—

“ I would not be a serving man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer,
The greedy hawks to fill ;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master too,
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And *no* work would I do.”

In the meantime, it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me,² of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to scratch out a living with my pen. God help the bear, if, having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and £5000 a-year, as it is not his lordship's merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be impatient to hear how your matters fadge, and will let you know the instant that I get any information which can be of the least importance. Ever yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

¹ Old Merrythought in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, now generally given to Beaumont. Merrythought's use of songs to convey his thought suggested David Gellatly's.

² Byron's *English Bards and Scottish Reviewers* was issued anonymously in March 1809. Byron made no secret of his authorship, and in October a second edition with his name appeared. Scott had doubtless learned in London who the author was and some details about him. He did not make his acquaintance through Murray till 1812.

I am impatient to see Kehama—Soon may you be at liberty Vacare musis.

Pray don't delay your visit to Lowther—personal acquaintance generally sharpens the zeal of a recommendation—in your case the consequence is certain.¹

[*Abbotsford Copies and Lockhart*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 8th August 1809

I do not know my dear Lady Abercorn how you are justified in your cruel treatment of me. It is now a very long time since I have heard from you and I have written you two long epistles filled with all the news good bad and indifferent which I thought likely to interest you. I directed as usual under cover to the Marquis so I think my letters cannot have miscarried unless his Lordship has intercepted them for literary curiosities to be bound with his history of Reynard the Fox. Seriously I hope my letter from town has reached you for it was written by special command of Lady Maria whom I had the pleasure to see several times during three months abode in London. I was quite mortified that the Priory was untenanted for I had a thousand things to tell your Ladyship besides the delight of exchanging a lodging in Half Moon Street Piccadilly for the groves and glades of the Priory. We (for I was in the plural number my wife and myself) saw enough of London gaiety to make us very glad to regain our own fireside regretting nothing so much as not having had it in our power to make our devoirs to Lord and Lady Abercorn.

I was several times at Kingston where her R. H. made several inquiries concerning your Ladyship and was surprized that I could not satisfy them so this plucked

¹ "As the answer to Senhouse," wrote Southey, "was accompanied with an invitation I must go shortly & make my acknowledgements at Lowther."

another plume from my vanity. I also saw Lady Charlotte Lindsay repeatedly.

We spent some days at Tunbridge with Sir Samuel and Lady Hood. Her Ladyship is my countrywoman an enthusiastic Highlander and deep in all manner of northern tradition. On my return I visited Knowles¹ [*sic*] and saw a gallery which I admired more than all the fine collections I have seen in London. Your Ladyship is probably no stranger to it—It contains an amazing collection of original portraits of eminent historical characters from the reign of Henry VII. downwards.

Since your Ladyship has made so long stay in Ireland I hope you don't propose to return before next summer because I have very serious thoughts of visiting green Erin next year with a view to make my edition of Swift as perfect and as much worthy of the permission of inscribing it to Lord A. as I possibly can. I have been tolerably successful in some of my researches and still hope I may add something to illustrate the works of so celebrated a classic.²

I hope this will find Lord Hamilton's health quite established. I was very uneasy when in town at hearing he was complaining & pleased in proportion when I

¹ Knowle or Knole, near Sevenoaks, Kent, given by Queen Elizabeth to the first Earl of Dorset and still in the possession of the Sackvilles.

² Evidently Scott's letters *had* miscarried, as Lady Abercorn, replying on the 17th, plainly states: "I do most sincerely assure you my dear Friend that I did not receive either of the letters you mention, and that I considered you in my debt a letter, and wondered that you had not written to me." Later she rates him severely about his Swift. "Your Swift does not much interest me, indeed I am angry when I think you waste time that you *cd.* employ to so much advantage and credit to yourself upon what gains you none. If I do not hear that you are proceeding in something of your own I shall get out of temper with you. If you knew the pleasure you *cd.* give those who admire geniuses you *wd.* not be so selfish as to doze over Swift. You must not be angry with me, but if you are, I shall not promise to cease *abusing* you. Those who have read the Lay and Marmion cannot be otherwise than provoked at the Authors time being mispent, who *wd.* if he chose with as little trouble (indeed less than this Swift takes) produce what no living Author is now capable of—I wish Mrs. Scott *wd.* interfere. I long to know Her, and spirit her on to torment you to death."—*Walpole Collection*.

learned he had got better. I beg my most respectful compliments to the Marquis & Lord Hamilton. I hope Mr. Wright continues to give his Lordship satisfaction in the management of his affairs in Scotland. The Marquis once thought to taking Edinburgh in his way returning to England. I hope your Ladyship won't be so false hearted as to make such a detour without letting me know as I shall break my heart if I have not the pleasure of showing you [the lions?] of our Northern Metropolis.

Adieu, my dear Lady Abercorn, and pray write to me soon, were it only to say you have not quite forgot your very faithful and most respectful

WALTER SCOTT

Lord Melville has been very unwell with his former bilious complaint. I fear he is imprudent at table. He was recovering when I last heard & I hope is now quite well.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE ¹

[ASHESTIEL, *August 15, 1809*]

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I have delayd writing to you from day to day in hope of being able to report progress about the delightful Legend more fully than I am even yet supplied with the means of doing. For indeed all I can say is that our Manager young Siddons is delighted with the piece and determined to bring it out with as much force as he can possibly muster. But his wife and he went to perform at Manchester and I left town before their return (if it has yet taken place) so that I really have not had opportunity to procure those *practical* remarks

¹ This letter was printed from the original and is also among the Abbotsford copies. Some parts cut away in the original are supplied from the latter source, being printed within brackets. The fragment on p. 221 belongs to this or to a lost letter.

which I expect his experience may enable him to suggest. I am concerned at this because of course the sooner You are possessed of them the more time you will have to consider any of them that may merit your attention. I have shewn the play to Erskine whose best pretension to such distinction though he has many is his early and decided preference of your dramatic works to all others of every age and country Shakespeare himself hardly excepted. But neither from him have I got more than general and unqualified expressions of satisfaction and pleasure. As I did not get your letter till I was safely landed I did not consult Mr. Mackenzie. Indeed I was willing to have young [Siddons']s remarks which may be really of consequence before those of any other person and for that purpose entrusted him with the Manuscript. Mr. Mackenzie is however a most excellent critic on dramatic composition and shall be the first person to whom I shew it so soon as I go to town.

There is a point of some little consequence which has not occurred to your recollection, namely how I am to arrange with Siddons about the profits of the piece, which if the play succeeds (as it cannot chuse but succeed splendidly) must necessarily be an object of considerable importance. He expressed himself willing to pay a sum of money which I declined for the present referring myself to your future instructions. I believe it will be better to abide by the author's rights which supposing the piece to run nine nights and so forth cannot be less than about £300 or £400. This is what I should prefer in my own case because I should then in any event neither have to reproach myself with making a foolish bargain for myself or with taking the Manager in by vain expectations.

There is a circumstance rather favourable to the effect upon the stage arising from the contrast between the tartan worn by the Macleans which has a red glaring effect and that of the Campbells which is dark green.

Thus the followers of the Chieftains will be at once distinguished from each other.¹

I think your answer to Lady Louisa's criticism upon Herberts departure from the Castle is quite convincing. But as the objection staggered me a good deal and may occur to others perhaps you will think of adding a line or two stating as an additional reason for his departure that his friends had no occasion for his aid in prosecuting their revenge. He is a delightful character the most interesting stage lover I have the honour to be acquainted with so we must leave no blot in his scutcheon, nor even the appearance of one.

I fear all this while you have been thinking me little better than the "fause Sir John" whom you previously entrusted with the legend; but I hope soon to send you all the remarks which can possibly occur as essential. Ballantyne the printer whom I think you may have seen at my house came here on Sunday last. Siddons had shewn him some parts of the Manuscript as they are on most intimate habits and expressed himself even more

¹ "It was late in 1809 that Miss Baillie's masterpiece [*The Family Legend*] was committed to Henry Siddons for production as the first new play under his direction, and preparations began such as had not been known since the circle of Hume brought out John Home's *Douglas*. Mackenzie was to criticize the play and suggest changes; he was also to attend all the rehearsals and act for the playwright. Walter Scott was to visit rehearsals and direct such details as the proper costuming of the Highland characters—a task which suited him exactly. He did more—he evidently wrote personal letters to all the chiefs of Highland clans, inviting them to attend and make the first performance a great Scottish occasion. . . . When Mackenzie first read it, he pointed out to its author that there might be offence to a Highland family in the character of Maclean. . . . While taking a number of other suggestions meekly, Miss Baillie pointed out to Mackenzie that she could not alter Maclean's character without rewriting the entire play; she could only suggest that Mackenzie bring out at rehearsals the personal courage of the Macleans. Evidently Scott and Mackenzie did not think this a sufficient *amende*. . . . Thus, with a prologue by Scott, and with a 'familiar, elegant, and witty' epilogue by Mackenzie, the play went on to its triumph. . . . As for Miss Baillie, she wrote to Mackenzie: 'I would not give up the applause of your Edinburgh audience for all the plaudits of our London theatres for these ten years to come.'"—H. W. THOMPSON, *A Scottish Man of Feeling: Henry Mackenzie* (1931), pp. 175-177.

warmly than to me on this subject. Now I like this excessively. For there is no saying how far a real and warm interest in a part may warm even a very middling performer. He has a bad way of planting his legs in attitudes which make me wish them broken on the wheel. However he is a good worthy young man and much of a gentleman. The theatre will I think be quite a *bijou* we supd in it as [Carrs] rooms on the night of the memorable Oxo[nian ball]. It is intended to be only temporary but I wish the Trustees would buy it outright and fit it up as a permanent theatre for I doubt our being able to raise £20,000 to build a new one and between our pride and our poverty the scheme may be left in the same state as the New College. I could tell you a long and piteous tale of our time being occupied with discharging the arrears of my duty literary and professional since I came down : but I must needs say my conscience hints at some very idle days spent in shooting and fishing.

Dr. & Mrs. Baillie talkd of being in Scotland this season and gave us hopes of seeing them at Ashestiel. Nothing would give us more pleasure than an opportunity of returning their kind hospitality. There are a good many things in this pastoral country worth seeing and we would have pride and pleasure in displaying them to the best advantage.

Charlotte joins in best & kindest compliments to Miss Baillie. What a pity that the art of Prince Housseins tapestry is lost and that folks who love each other can only converse by the assistance of their fore finger & thumb.

You will oblige me very much by the permission to insert any little stray copy of verses which you may entrust me with in a little selection of poetical specimens entitled "English Minstrelsy" now printing by Ballantyne for his Brother who has opend trade in Edinr. as a bookseller and publisher. The selection contains some very pretty things both ancient and modern. Believe me honoured in permission to subscribe myself your affectionate & unworthy brother in the Muse. WALTER SCOTT

[. . . this scrawl to Dr Baillie's care as the surest way of reaching you. What think you of Spain? the days of William Wallace & of the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there.]

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London, and Abbotsford Copies*]

TO REV. MR. BERWICK

DEAR SIR,—I was duly honoured with your liberal kind and most interesting letter. It has been my fate so very often to form by epistolary correspondence some of the most valuable literary connections and private friendships which I can boast that it is no new thing for me to have all the regard of intimacy for a correspondent to whom I am personally an utter stranger. Your acquaintance with my respected friend Lady Charlotte Rawdon¹ gives me another tie upon your favour of which I am proud and happy to avail myself. During Lord Moira's command in Scotland I had the pleasure to see her Ladyship often and to be honoured with her esteem. I have also several valuable letters from the late Lady Moira containing a great deal of very curious information which I have reason to suppose could have been derived from no other source. I regretted much not seeing Lady Charlotte when I was last in London though she did Mrs. Scott the honour of calling. But retournons a nos moutons. I have a world of questions about the Dean which your kindness encourages to put without order and just in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me.

¹ Who had written to Scott on the 15th telling him she had found by a letter from her excellent friend, Mr. Berwicke, that "any introduction from me would be superfluous, as he has had the honor of hearing from you himself on the subject of Swift. . . . I hope you have got all the information you sought from my friend Berwicke, he is worthy of your acquaintance. I know few such Heads, his mind is highly informed & his disposition admirable, on the subject of Swift he is an Enthusiast & he wrote to me in great triumph at finding your opinions congenial to his own!"—*Walpole Collection*.

The correspondence between Swift and Vanessa must be of the utmost curiosity and I am both surprised and delighted at hearing of its being in existence. It is impossible to justify Swift in his conduct to Stella and Vanessa, yet we must make great allowance for the frailty of a mind seduced by finding himself the exclusive object of love and admiration of two such fascinating women. Unquestionably Swift had [a] vain idea of maintaining a platonic love with both and as sex did not enter into his views of the connexion he possibly thought there was no risque in giving either a rival. How vain and how weak the attempt of maintaining with two different ladies a connection which had all the intenseness of affection though not of desire the event well shewd.¹

The Legion Club has been almost unintelligible in former editions for want of those illustrations with which your goodness proposes to supply me. Richard Tighe so frequently the object of Swift's satire was I presume the Dick Fitz Baker of that performance. I am particularly desirous to learn something of this person's history and of that of Joshua Lord Ailen satirized by the Dean under the name of Traulus. L. C. Justice Whitsted and Judge Beal claim also some attention sufficient at least to make intelligible the particular sarcasms which Swift has launched against them.

I have the first collection of the Drapiers Letters published by Faulkner in 1725 under the title *Fraud Detected or the Hibernian Patriot*. They are stated to have been collected and published by the order of the Drapiers Club at Mr. Taplins in Truck Street. The collection contains several songs of the said patriotic club in honour of the Drapier (very sorry poetry). It also

¹ "From the publication of the whole correspondence between Cadenus and Vanessa, with which Mr. Scott has been favoured by the Rev. Edward Berwick, there is not a man existing, who is not now convinced of the harmlessness of the connexion."—*A Defence of Dr. Jonathan Swift, etc. . . . in answer to certain Observations . . . in the Fifty-Third Number of The Edinburgh Review*. [By Edward Berwick.] London, 1819, p. 55.

contains *Some Considerations on the attempt to pass Woods money &c* "By a Lover of his country" and *Some Reasons Shewing the necessity the people of Ireland are under to refuse this coinage by the same Author*. These tracts are well written and I suspect by the Dean himself.¹ Faulkner closes in the preface with the poem of Prometheus (which we know to be Swift's) and says that no pen but the Drapier could have written like his. Pray my dear Sir what do you think of these pieces. Ought they to be received into the Works *cum nota*. Faulkner doubtless speaks of them as written by a Gentleman distinct from the Drapier but this may only mean that they were not written by Swift under the same assumed character which he had taken in the beginning of the contest and the same distinction is made as to Prometheus the authorship of which is indisputable.

In a letter of Lord Orrery to Dean Swift he mentions a strange and shocking story of an assault made upon the person of the Dean in the unfortunate declension of his faculties by Mr. Wilson a Clergyman. What followed upon this atrocious matter? I should have thought the "jolly boys of St. Patrick the Cauvan Demons" would have torn the miscreant limb from limb.

Among the various reasons alleged for the Dean's strange conduct towards Stella and Vanessa personal imperfections have been currently resorted to and I own plausibly. A late author connecting the supposed frigidity with Swift's deafness and fits of giddiness is hardy enough to assign a cause for the imperfection—see Dr. Beddoes' *Hygeia* ² Vol. III p. 186. But it is a cause too

¹ The five "Drapiers' Letters" were reprinted in *Fraud detected in the "Hibernian Patriot," with other trifles*, Dublin, 1725, 12mo. *The Hibernian Patriot; being a collection of the Drapiers' letters to the People of Ireland, concerning Mr. Wood's Brass Half-Pence, etc.* 8vo. Dublin printed London reprinted, 1730.

² *Hygeia; or Essays moral and medical, or the causes affecting the personal state of our middling and affluent classes.* By Thomas Beddoes. 3 vols. 8vo. Bristol, 1802-3.

disgraceful to be adopted on the *ipse dixit* of a theorist or even to be alluded to. Swift himself always imputes his giddiness to indigestion in consequence of a surfeit in fruit.

Excuse my dear Sir this desultory letter and when you consider its length and its character dont be too apprehensive of the trouble of my correspondence, which you shall check guide and manage in the way most easy for you. I cannot hope to visit Ireland before next Spring. Should your goodness at any time lead you to extend your correspondence beyond the bounds of an ordinary epistle my friend Mr. Robert Dundas now your Secretary of State will transmit anything through me that you may chuse to send under his all franking cover. Believe me my dear Sir Ever your much obliged very humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 17 August 1809

[*Owen D. Young*]

To JOHN BACON MORRITT

I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Morritt did I not early acknowledge your interesting packet. I like the feudal tale¹ upon reading it several times over even better than I did when I heard it in Portland place yet that is saying a great deal. It has occasional roughness in the measure yet no more than the usual license of the antique ballad readily admits so I will not urge you upon any further sacrifice of sense or spirit to mere sound. I intend to couple it with Glenfinlas in the third volume of the Border Ballads. They have neither of them much to [do] there but we must trust their contents will be their best apology.

I have a letter from Gifford the first time I have heard from him since I left London. I really tremble for the fate of the Quarterly. G. is able and good humoured

¹ *The Curse of Moy : A Highland Tale*, by J. B. S. Morritt, which appeared in vol. iii. of the fifth edition (1812) of the *Border Minstrelsy*.

and most heartily zealous and yet I fear he will not succeed in making a cake of the right leaven for the present generation. I will not take to the boat however while the ship holds together and so I will open on your friend Mrs. Montagues letters ¹ which are well worthy to be pelted out of the field. Why are we not within ten miles that we might con over grievances together at least weekly. This drubbing of the French at Talavera makes amends for much political martyrdom. Not contented with spelling over the gazette rather longer than Charlottes patience endured, like the Upholsterer in the farce I beat up my Neighbour Laidlaw (the splendour of whose *kirn* you cannot have forgotten) to make him *happy* too. That honest gentleman as well as I myself was however a little staggerd at the inactivity of Cuesta's 30,000 Spaniards. I suppose Sir Arthur did not care to trust them out of leading strings otherwise I should have deemd the Spaniard too much of a Fidalgo [*sic*] to suffer his allies to engross both buffets and glory. I trust they will be able to play Old Gooseberry with Sebastiani after having had the benefit of such an example. Why have not these dishes of skimd milk upon the Continent a little of that dogged English courage which sets off by saying you may overpower me but you shall not rout me.

I snap at your offer of the translations from Metastasio like a dog at a butterd crust. The version of *Ti Soverrai di mi* is exquisitely beautiful but as beggars must not be chusers I refer myself to the ladies to chuse which they think will do the miscellany most honour. Here is a trifle ² I intend to send—a pitiful sonnet wrote in former days to my mistresses eye-brow or rather eyelid after it had wept itself dry.

¹ *The Letters of Mrs. E. Montagu, etc.* . . . published by M. Montagu 4 vols. 8vo, London, 1809-13.

² It appears as the poem, "The Violet," in the Poetical Works under date of 1797.

The violet in her summer bower
 Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle
 May boast herself the fairest flower
 In glen or copse or forest dingle.

Though sweet its gem of azure hue
 Beneath the dew drops weight reclining
 I've seen an eye of lovelier blue
 More sweet through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry
 Ere yet the day be past its morrow
 Nor longer in my false loves eye
 Remained the tear of part[in]g sorrow.

[A mad world] my masters as friar John says.

I have no news to send you from the banks of Tweed excepting that we may safely and truly adopt Touchstones chorus "The rain it raineth every day."

My kind respects attend Mrs. and Miss Morritt and Charlotte offers her love to all at Rokeby. I ever am
 Yours most sincerely

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 17 Augt. 1809

[Law]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

YOUR kind letter my dear Miss Clephane with all its obliging and interesting inclosures¹ has been upbraiding me with ingratitude for these few days past. My time has recently been occupied by the unexpected arrival of two stranger Southernns a governor and a pupil who in attempting to penetrate through the hills from Yarrow to the vale of Tweed lost their way, their hats, their horses, their servants, each other, their wits, and well

¹ She had enclosed with her letter of 7th August "a translation of the words of the Gaelic coronach of Sir Lauchlan Maclean (the hero of the war song) which has become so popular as to be the coronach of the clan" along with "the story of the wild bull, and another family anecdote or two as you was so good as desire to have some of them." She was anxious "to receive the Priest of Aberbrothock & Ave Mare Stella; there are tunes on the stocks for both of them, & I hope the Mare Stella will turn out well."-*Walpole Collection.*

nigh (for the night approached) their lives. I was obliged to raise the hue and cry among the Shepherds before the younger could be recoverd and brought in safety to our farm. They left me this morning and as they came through peril by field they are returning by flood for it has pourd ever since their departure. A pretty recollection they will retain of Ettricke forest.

But to the purpose—I have transcribed Sir Ralph the Rover¹ from memory very imperfectly and inaccurately I do believe—it seems to me that the arrangements of the stanza into four lines does not uniformly throw the pauses with spirit and effect. But you may perhaps be able to find out a better plan of dividing the lines. I find I have left the book containing Ave Maria Stella in Edinburgh an error which I will remedy the first time I go there. As a slight indemnification you will find some lack-a-daysical lines on a violet which I divid for the nonce in the non-age of my Muse. Perhaps you may find a tune for them, the only circumstance which can give them any value. Although I am so much your debtor on the accompt of obligation I venture to prefer a request, to have the *air* of Montroses lines, the words are familiar to me. It is for my little girl that I request this favour. She begins to sing occasionally and though I am uncertain whether she will ever come to any proficiency worth mentioning it is always interesting to Papa and Mama. Did I tell you that I had selected (as a favour to the little Ballantyne just commencing the bookselling trade) a small collection of ancient and modern pieces called English Minstrelsy, when it is published I will send you a copy as it will contain Queen Oracca and some other little things not hitherto published.

I am glad you like Spenser who in defiance of the tedium of a long continued allegory is a prime favourite of mine. Old Dr. Blacklock a blind bard who may have been

¹ Southey's ballad *The Inchcape Rock*, printed in *Morning Post*, 1803 and in *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 1810.

known to Mrs. Clephane put him into my hands when I was at the High School and I connect many pleasant ideas with the first perusal.¹ If you read with attention the history of Queen Elizabeths time you may percieve that besides his moral allegory Spenser had a political allegory couchd under his tissue of romantic fiction. Thus Prince Arthur represents in one sense Magnanimity a Heroic Virtue, in another the Earl of Leicester the unworthy favourite of Elizabeth and patron of Spenser. Duessa is Falsehood in general but she is also poor Queen Mary. The adventures of Timias are well known to be an allegorical account of the life of Raleigh. You have his desperate engagement at the ford which he really defended against a large party of Irish rebels, his disgrace wt. Belphoebe (Q. Elizabeth) for an intrigue with Miss Throgmorton &c. &c. I have often thought that the difficulty and even danger of carrying on this part of the allegorical mystery was a principal reason of the poets leaving the poem imperfect. The key which he proposed to make had too many and too complicated wards so he left it unfinished in despair.

Some traces of political allegory may be discovered in the Orlando Furioso but they are in detached portions of the poem which generally speaking is a *bona fide* romance.

Just after receiving your letter I received a long one from Lord Glenbervie² who is about to edit Gawain

¹ According to Lockhart it was very probably to his intimacy with Adam Fergusson that Scott owed his acquaintance with the blind poet, the Rev. Dr. Blacklock, "whom Johnson, twelve years earlier, 'beheld with reverence.'" "The kind old man," Scott wrote in his autobiographic fragment, "opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. . . . Spenser I could have read for ever . . . the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous."

² Sylvester Douglas (1743-1823), lawyer and politician, created Baron Glenbervie of Kincardine; in the peerage of Ireland. See *D.N.B.* He married the daughter of Lord North. The edition of Gawain Douglas never matured. His letter, dated 11th August, is in the Walpole Collection.

Douglas's works. It contained many long queries concerning the history of the Douglasses for the preface is to give some account of the most distinguished heroes of the family. On some of these I was able to give his lordship a little information but the following I submit to your consideration as chiefly interested in the questions not without hopes that by Mrs. Clephanes kind assistance you may contribute to clear his doubts. In recompense I have enquired at Lord Glenbervie if he knows as a great genealogist anything of the descent of the mother of the Knight of Acre. You know how much I admire Sir Sidney and cannot doubt I will be delighted could I hope to assist in appropriating his descent to the Doughty Douglasses. Lord Glenbervies queries are—

What authority is there for saying that the Lady whose arm was broken at the murder of James I she having thrust it into the Staple to supply the bar, was of the family of Morton.

The Douglas that perished at Chatham when the Dutch burned the Fleet of Charles II's reign because he would not leave his blazing ship without orders—of what family was he?

Who was the Douglas who is mentioned in Carletons Memoirs as having sacrificed his life to return the standard of his regiment at the battle of Steenkirk I believe?—

Now to a Douglas like you “here's room for meditation” as for me whose moss trooping veins have only such a tincture of Douglas blood as a drop of Ottar of roses would be in a barrell of whisky it cannot be expected that I should be at all *au fait* of such deep subjects of enquiry.

I am delighted with your highland tales and with Mrs Clephanes goodness in dictating them. I shall certainly one day turn them to excellent account but it must be after I have visited you in the Hebrides, and that I fear is a remote prospect.

Charlotte joins kindest and best remembrances to Mrs. Clephane and Miss Anne to whom I beg my most respectful and kind compliments and am very truly your most obliged and faithful humble servant,

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 17 *August* 1809.

P.S.—I am sorry you have had any subject of disagreement with Lady H. but I can more readily pardon her appropriating your verses than your underrating them.¹

The Coronach of Maclean is one of the most beautiful specimens of Celtic poetry I have ever seen. I would attempt to gratify you by putting it into English Metre, but I distrust my own powers of combining the same degree of strength and simplicity.

[*Northampton*]

TO SAMUEL ROGERS

MY DEAR ROGERS,—I am about to ask a great boon of you which I shall hold an especial courtesy if you can find in your heart to comply with. I have hampered myself by a promise to a young bookseller whom I am for various reasons desirous to befriend that I would look over and make additions to a little miscellany of poetry which he has entitled *English Minstrelsy* and on which his Brother James Ballantyne the Scottish Bodoni intends to exert the utmost extent of his typographical skill. The selection is chiefly from the smaller pieces of dead authors but it would be very imperfect without a few specimens from the present masters of the Lyre. I have never told you how high my opinion so far as it is worth any thing ranks

¹“Lady Hood,” she says in her letter of the 7th, “has play’d us a sad trick . . . we trusted her with some ridiculous verses, which she finds she has either mislaid, or let be carried off. She positively promised to shew them to no one; however it is experience for us . . . but it is a very awkward affair and has vex’d us a little.”

you in that honour'd class. But I am now called upon to say in my own personal vindication that no collection of the kind can be completed without a specimen from the Author of the pleasures of Memory and therefore to transfer all responsibility from myself to you I make the present application. Beggars should not be chusers—therefore I most generously abandon to you the choice of what you will give my begging box and am only importunate that you will not turn me empty from your door. I would not willingly exert my influence with you in vain nor leave my miscellany so imperfect as it will be without something of yours.¹ Why won't you think of coming to see our lands of mist and snow. Not that I have the hardness of heart to wish you and George Ellis here at this moment for it would be truly the meeting of the Weird Sisters in thunder lightening & in rain. The lightening splintered an oak tree before my door last week with such a concussion that I thought all was gone to wrack. I have pretty good nerves for one of the irritable and sensitive race we belong to but I question whether even the poet laureate would have confided composedly in the *sic evitabile fulmen* annexed to his wreath of bays. Believe me dear Rogers Ever Yours most Sincerely

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 18th August [1809].

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ Rogers did not reply till 22nd September, when he enclosed a "scrap" of verse. "It is," he says, "if I may venture an opinion, at least as unexceptionable as any I have to offer, & in size I believe the most considerable. The subject is the death of Mrs. Duff & it is addressed to her sister, the Duchess of St. Albans. I believe I once repeated it to you." The poem appears as "To * * * on the Death of her Sister" in the *English Minstrelsy* (1810), vol. ii. (No. 61), pp. 238-39. The opening verse runs:

Ah! little thought she, when, with wild delight,
By many a torrent's shining track she flew,
When mountain-glens, and caverns full of night
O'er her young mind divine enchantment threw.

Scott's contributions consisted of "With Flowers from a Roman Wall," "The Bard's Incantation," and "The Violet."

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. LADY CHARLOTTE RAWDON

I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Lady Charlotte did I permit your Ladyships letter with which I am this moment honoured to remain unanswered even a single post. I was obliged to leave town for a few days when your Ladyship honoured Mrs. Scott with a visit in Half Moon Street and on my return had the misfortune to find Lady Charlotte was gone to Brighton if I rightly recollect the answers of the Porter in St. James's Palace.

Mr. Berwick has behaved towards me in the kindest way possible and what was still more flattering has taught me to ascribe a great part of his civility to the interest your Ladyship bestows on my undertakings. Every person to whom I have applied joins in representing him as the most deeply skilled in all that relates to the interesting object of my recent researches. In short "Go to Berwick" has not been more frequently called for in a ball room than it was returned in answer to all my enquiries about Swift. So I went to Berwick accordingly and have every hope of profiting by my journey. I am only afraid of wearying his kindness by the multiplicity of my demands but I must trust to your Ladyships Interest with him to plead my apology.

Your Ladyships letter forcibly recalled the agreeable evening society at poor dear Lady Charlottes.¹ I can never think on her without deep emotion, with talents, rank, beauty, accomplishments, above all with the best of human hearts how much she has had to suffer in her passage through this valley of Sorrow. Petty paltry calumny, pecuniary embarrassment, the long lingering and cruel illness of poor Jack Campbell whom her attentions alone could soothe and gratify at last his death for whom I may say she had lived almost exclusively and

¹ "I cannot dwell on our Dear unfortunate Lady Charlotte Campbell, she excites in me those reverential feelings that belong to a better world." So Lady Rawdon wrote in her letter of the 15th, already quoted.

all this distress accumulated on a mind peculiarly sensitive makes up a bitter cup indeed.

It is about three years since I was in the romantic country where your Ladyship is now enjoying I hope better weather than we can boast among these mountains. I was then particularly interested in the ruined towers of Ashby de la Zouche built if I mistake not by your Ladyships ancestor the celebrated Lord Hastings, beheaded by Richard of Gloucester. I thought a good deal about Lord Moira your Ladyship and your honoured Mother (whose letters I preserve as reliques) at the time I visited these splendid remains of feudal magnificence.

Tomorrow I believe Lady Dalkeith will arrive at Bowhill a shooting seat of Lord Ds. not far from this place. The happy birth of another boy has in some degree dispelled the gloom which the untimely death of my lamented young Chief spread over her and I trust time which converts the deepest wounds to scars will at length restore her usual Cheerfulness.

Mrs. Scott begs to offer her most respectful & affectionate compliments to your Ladyship. I wish we could transport you to this wilderness where to make up for narrow Lodgings & sorry Cheer you should have old ballads family legends of feud & battles and tales of Ghosts and fairies without measure or limit.

I have serious thoughts of visiting Ireland next Spring for I feel bound in honour to make my Editn. of the Dean of St. Patricks in some degree worthy of the interest your Ladyship honours it with.

I have the honour to remain with great respect your Ladyships most obedient & faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL NEAR SELKIRK 20th August [1809]

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MRS. SCOTT

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I received your note and have made all necessary enquiries after the little boy.¹ His mother and her husband are now settled in Selkirk & living in a very decent and orderly manner. The boy as I learn from all the neighbours is very much attended to & both are greatly attached to him. I therefore doubt whether he could be placed in any family where he would be so well attended to or in any town where I could know so exactly how he comes on. He is said to be of a quiet bookish disposition so that I have put him (being now nine years old) to the grammar school at Selkirk which is fortunately a very excellent one. I shall look after his education and if he shews any aptitude for learning he may make his choice between the Law and the Kirk as in either profession if I live and he himself behave well I can probably assist him materially. The Mother & her husband shew the utmost reluctance to part with him and unless I was sure that it was to be very materially to his advantage I should think it harsh to take him from them to place him any where, where possibly he might be less attended to. He is always very neatly dressd & is really a very pretty boy. I hope you will come to Ashestiel this summer and you shall see him here.

Charlotte and I are quite well and much obliged for your attention to the little bodies. Love to the Major. Ever affectionately & dutiful son

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Sunday* [1809]

Pray take care of yourself this damp weather. I shall be responsible for any extra expence attending Daniels education. The idea of his being a clergyman seems to

¹ Daniel's natural son, William Scott, after serving with David Bridges, clothier, Edinburgh, went to Canada and died in poor circumstances at Montreal in April 1869. See *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, vol. iii. pp. 171, 273, 344, 396 and 443.

flatter his mother very much and she promises the strictest attention to his morals.

[*Law*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

SINCE I heard last from you I have been enjoying myself *al fresco* on the banks of Loch Lomond, which (no offence) could put Derwentwater into its waistcoatpocket. Moreover, I met with an old follower of Rob Roy, who had been at many a spreagh (foray) with that redoubted free-booter, and shewd me all his holds. On my return I found the enclosed from Ellis, which I think is worth the double postage which, failing a frank it is like to cost you. He is an excellent and warm-hearted friend and I long to make you acquainted side by side, as I believe three folks, even the three graces, cannot be said to meet face to face. When I see Geo: Canning and Geo: Ellis most anxious about the prosperity of Ro: Southey, and remember former days it reminds me of

via salutis,

Quod minime reris, Graia pandetur ab urbe.¹

I am convinced that what Swift said of Whig and Tory is true of most civil dissensions and that the really honest only require to know each others sentiments to agree while knaves and fools invent catch-words and shibboleths and war-cries to keep them from coming to a just understanding.

I thought it by far the best way in a negotiation of some delicacy, that Ellis and Canning should know your own precise statement of your views and politics which straind through another medium than that of your own manly and independent expressions might have suffered in strength, spirit and precision. I intend to answer Ellis, pressing the augmentation of the pension as a mode of cutting short dependance. It may be

¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 96.

resigned when the Historiographers place (for which you are so peculiarly fitted) shall open to you, or any preferment suitable to your wishes in emolument and in the nature of its duty.

You will see that Ellis agrees with you and me in Spanish matters—alas ! alas ! an evil fate seems to arm the enemy with weapons not his own and disconcert every effort in that glorious cause. God for his own wise ends has sent confusion into all counsellors that are formed against the destined scourge of his wrath “ appall’d the guilty and made mad the free.” How it is to end heaven knows ; I who am by nature and feeling no croaker hardly dare venture to conjecture.

Don’t tease yourself or Pater noster about the *Morte Arthur* but take your own time. My idea was entirely different from yours, to reprint namely the whole from the only original Caxton which is extant with all the superstition and harlotrie which the castrator in the reign of Edward VI chose to omit.¹ A Classic of Henry VIIth time is so valuable that I still think once you have been afloat for a year or two I will give a very limited edition of Sir Thomas Mallory in his native dress. But this is a distant vision.

I like your Missionary article exceedingly and I think you will join with me in admiring the beautiful conclusion of the last Review on Spanish affairs²—But we must have

¹ Probably Scott means the edition of 1557 published by Wyllyam Copland : Londō, with prologue by Caxton. See letter to Southey, November 1807, when this project of an edition of the *Morte d’Arthur* was first broached to Southey.

² Southey’s article on the Baptist Missionary Society had appeared in the first number. The article on Spanish affairs to which Scott refers as closing the third number, which had been issued at the end of August, was drafted by Ellis and completed by Canning. The issue had been delayed in waiting for it. See Smiles, *Memoir of John Murray*, chap. vii. The article is largely a criticism of the defence of Sir John Moore written by his brother James Moore. We shall find Scott approached in consequence of this article. The remaining article referred to is one on Lord Valentia’s *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt*, in the years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806. The article does little more than analyse the narrative and reproduces the criticisms of Bruce’s veracity.

a little fun in our next, for which purpose I intend to play football with Mrs. Montagues *Letters*. I think Lord Valentia is rather inferior to Bruce. I know that surly Patagonian, and though he may have romanced in matters where his own prowess was concerned yet I think no one could ever have described the battles of Serbraxes and the strange dispersion which afterwards took place, without having seen it. Genl. Murray saw two Abyssinians in Upper Egypt at the time of the Indian army's being there, the elder of whom remembered Bruce as the commander of the Koccob horse and he remarked that although they did not always immediately recollect circumstances mentioned by the traveller, yet such frequently recurred to their recollection with all their particulars, a day or two afterwards. I therefore think the negative evidence as to his warlike and princely character good for little. Even with our newspapers and gazettes who pretends to remember all who have been made peers and knighted and as for fighting, a prince who left Bruce at home if he could have brought him out neglected the most able-bodied associate you ever saw. Qendragon was a joke to him in size and muscle.

By the way Ellis fixes on me an article about Miss Edgeworths *Tales* which I never saw. I have nothing in the last Rev^w. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 10 *September* [1809]

[*Brotherton*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 14th *September* 1809

YOUR valued token of remembrance my dear Lady Marchioness found me a traveller in the skirts of our Highlands¹ and consequently did not receive quite so early

¹ "On the rising of the Court in July he went, accompanied by Mrs. Scott and his eldest daughter, to revisit the localities so dear to him in the days of his juvenile rambling, which he had chosen for the scene of his fable (*the Lady of the Lake*). He gave a week to his old friends at Cambus-

an acknowledgment as if I had been quiet at home. I had promised to meet the Judge of Admiralty Sir William Scott near Loch Lomond but behold he received an express announcing his lady's sudden decease. I never in my life saw such a frightful person as the deceased so I cannot suppose the survivors grief will be quite overpowering. Indeed had the lady been my property I would have been tempted to reverse the unfeeling speech of a border chief who having lost one of his sons & got a grant of the murderers lands, declared them well worth a dead son. So I think the riddance of such an extraordinary encumbrance (for she baffled description) was well worth a peep at Loch Lomond.

I have taken my wife who is fond of flowers into my counsels about the flower-roots & she is to make a proper selection which she trusts your Ladyship will accept as a small token of her respect. You need not be afraid that any of them will cost quite so much as the tulip root for which the Dutchman gave his country house & garden

more, and ascertained in his own person that a good horseman, well mounted, might gallop from the shore of Loch Vennachar to the rock of Stirling within the space allotted for that purpose to FitzJames. From Cambusmore the party proceeded to Ross Priory and under the guidance of Mr. Macdonald Buchanan explored the isles of Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Loch Sloy, and all the scenery of a hundred desperate conflicts between the Macfarlanes, the Colquhouns, and the Clan Alpine. At Buchanan House, which is very near Ross Priory, Scott's friends Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart were then visiting the Duke of Montrose; he joined them there and read to them the Stag Chase which he had just completed under the full influence of the genius loci. It was on this occasion, at Buchanan House, that he first saw Lord Byron's satire."—LOCKHART.

Lockhart is clearly wrong in placing this jaunt in July-August for Scott writes to Morritt on the 22nd July from Ashestiel and to Lady Abercorn from the same address on the 8th of August, and makes no mention of the trip in either letter. It must have been in the end of August and the beginning of September as the letter to Southey of the 10th September shows and that to Lady Abercorn of the 14th. Now in a letter to Southey of 7th August he mentions Byron's satire, and it is difficult to believe that he had heard nothing of it in London in May and June. In his letter of (8th) August to Scott Southey writes: "Lord Byron's waggery was new to me and I cannot help wishing you may some day have an opportunity of giving him the retort as neatly as you have given it to that poor envious old Cumberland." Lockhart's tale may be due to some slip of Scott's memory in later years.

in exchange. They are all ordinary things. The worst is that they cannot be safely sent till a week or two hence for some reasons which I don't understand but Mr. Wright is to take care that they are safely forwarded by the Mail coach.

I can easily conceive the cruel scene [?] which Lord Hamilton's illness must have exhibited & how the Marquis must have felt all his former griefs & hopes revived in anticipating so overwhelming a dispensation. Thank God he is better & I trust likely to continue so. But the life of a bachelor however well regulated is in many respects so unfavourable to a youth of delicate health that nothing would give me more sincere pleasure than to hear that Lord Hamilton¹ was happily settled in life & that the lines of the family were extending to another generation. But the Great cannot make these arrangements so easily as the middle classes so the Heir of Abercorn must in the first place get quite confirmed in strength and then look about him.

The sight of our beautiful Mountains and lakes (though not new to me), and your Ladyship's kind exhortations have sett me to threading verses together with what success I am yet uncertain. But if I am not able to please myself at all it is but a step to the fireside and the poem will go into smoke like half the projects of this world. Then says caution you hazard any little credit you have acquired and may disgrace the good opinion of your friends by venturing again on the public arena. To which resolution replies in the words of the great Marquis of Montrose

He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small
Who dares not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.

¹ James Hamilton, styled Viscount Hamilton, son of the marquess by his first wife, Catherine Copley, born in 1786. He married in the November of 1809, but died in 1814 before the death of Scott's marquess in 1818. His son, born in 1811, became the first Duke of Abercorn.

The worst is I am not very good or patient in slow and careful composition and sometimes remind myself of a drunken man who could run along enough after he could not walk. I must however invoke the assistance of my friendly critics and particularly of the Marquis when my manuscript is in such forwardness as to admit of its being presented for his inspection. Your Ladyship will recollect that he is to have an interest in it as patron in case it succeeds so it will be for his Lordship's credit that as few errors remain in it as possible.

I cannot think what has become of my two letters. I have a notion that the first may have found its way to Stanmore & is still lying there. That which I wrote from London was intrusted with some others to a rascally valet-de-place whom I was forced to employ in consequence of my own servant meeting with an accident. So I should not be surprized if that is never heard of.

I saw the Princess several times when in London. She was in the highest possible spirits and very witty and entertaining. Lewis was of all her parties, an acquaintance which her Royal Highness had acquired when I was in London. Of course I was only a second-rate conjuror but did my best to amuse her. The P—— did me the honour to speak of me in terms of considerable bitterness before I came up to town—so I have no chance of being the poet laureate of the next reign.¹ It is curious how every word of such a personage is caught up and repeated to those whom it concerns; a circumstance that ought to make them peculiarly cautious for although few people can do them real service the meanest have it often in their power to do them essential injury. But I can never wish his father's son and the heir of the Crown otherwise than well and am as safe in my obscurity from the effects of his prejudice as a worm beneath a stone from the foot of Goliath of Gath.

¹ To what Scott refers I do not know. Probably his intimacy with the Princess and her Household had disturbed the Prince Regent. Later he became one of Scott's warmest admirers.

The Duchess of Gordon is at Kinrara her highland farm where I have heard she shows to greater advantage than anywhere being more sedate and less overpowering. I dare say she cares very little about the issue of her Caro sposo's affair.¹ I saw him in Edinr. in summer and it seemed to sit very light on his spirits. Huntly is I suppose by this time in Britain—we shall have the deuce to do about that unlucky expedition & between it & our Spanish misfortunes there seems to be a grave doubt of the Ministry keeping their ground next Session of parliament—I spent two days at the Duke of Montrose's seat near Loch Lomond very pleasantly the more so as Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart (Lord Bute's sister) both my special cronies were in the house. We went daily on the lake in a very nice boat with ten highland rowers "all plaided and plumed in their tartan array" and visited every island that was interesting.

I will endeavour if possible to come to Ireland before your Ladyship leaves it. The business of the Judicature Commission may indeed stop me, or perhaps the whole before that time may have passed into other hands and I shall be a gentleman at large.

Charlotte offers her respectful compliments & I beg to be most respectfully remembered to Lord Abercorn and am Dear Lady Abercorn Your much obliged very faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK

It would be highly ungrateful in me my dear Sir to postpone acknowledging your most valued and curious communication which I will not fail to adapt to the particular passages in the freeholder and to use with due acknowledgement. I am not unacquainted with Lord

¹ "An unpleasant charge which ultimately came before the King's Bench, Dec. 7th 1809. The Duke was acquitted."—DOUGLAS, *Familiar Letters*.

Forbes¹ whom I remember as a studious and interesting young Man when Lord Moira had command in Scotland. Should you at any time be disposed to favour me with a packet beyond the common size of a letter it may be safely addressed under cover to "George Hammond Esq War Office London" who will forward it as those official franks carry every weight.

I have fag'd very hard at Swifts Journal in which I agree with you he displays more of his true Character & history than can be collected from any other source. As this is a letter of thanks and acknowledgement I will restrain my inquisitive temper upon the present occasion and limit myself to an anxious wish that I could do anything for you or any of your friends that could shew in the slightest degree my sense of your kindness. I have heard nothing of Miss White for an age. I hope she has not suffered her enthusiastic taste for the romantic to carry her under the waters of the Lake of Killarney in search of the fairy castle of King Donoghoe. I have received since I had the pleasure of hearing from you a very kind letter from Lady Charlotte Rawdon who expresses herself [gratified] that Mr. Berwick, the only man whose aid was absolutely indispensable to my project should have agreed to afford me his countenance— You see my dear Sir I omit no opportunity to strengthen my influence—with you being deeply conscious how much it exceeds the desert of Dear Sir your most faithful and obliged

ASHESTIEL 16 Sept. 1809.

W. SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ Viscount Forbes was the courtesy title of the eldest son of the Earl of Granard. The lord in question was probably George John Forbes, born 3rd May, 1785, whose mother was the fourth daughter of the first Earl of Moira. He was Major-General for Co. Longford 1806-32. On the 8th, from Castle Forbes, Berwick had written: "The Lady of this Castle is sister to Lady Charlotte Rawdon, & is a most charming woman—her husband the Earl of Granard whose ancestors came from Scotland in James I time built it. Her eldest son is Lord Forbes, whom you may have seen in Scotland with his Uncle Lord Moira."—*Walpole Collection*. Moira was Berwick's patron.

TO THE HONBLE. WM. SPENCER

MY DEAR SPENCER,—Your letter with its kind and elegant contents reached me two days ago. Your two pieces are so equally beautiful that I will not permit the Bookseller to make choice between them but will make my own option on booksellers principles by chusing the *longest*, as I know no better way of deciding upon their several merits.¹ If you do not chuse to write us long poems to be sure we must be contented with what you call *vers de societe*, on the old principle that beggars must not be chusers, but it is no difficult task to guess what you could do een if you would. It was Campbell who put me on the trace of the exquisite morceau “Too late I staid”—he repeated it to me and admired it excessively.

The verses to Miss Beckford are truly beautiful. I am ashamed to have nothing to send you in exchange for so much exquisite amusement except a sort of *nothing*

¹ As a fact three poems by Spencer are printed in the second part of the *English Minstrelsy*: *The Death of True Love, To . . .*, and an *Epitaph on the Year 1806*, none of them very long nor very striking. The last has something of a Swinburnian movement :

’Tis gone with its thorns and its roses,
With the dust of dead ages to mix !
Time’s charnel for ever encloses
The year eighteen hundred and six !

But his model is probably *Praed*. William Robert Spencer (1769-1834) was a friend of the wits of the day, Fox, Sheridan, Sydney Smith, etc., and both a translator and a writer of light verse and ballads. He died in poverty and obscurity in Paris.

Spencer adds a postscript to his letter of the 11th September : “Did you ever see this Epigram address’d to *two sisters* who desir’d the author to decide which he thought the handsomest—

Vous etes belle, et votre sœur est belle,
Entre vous deux tout choix me seroit doux,
L’Amour etait *blond* comme vous,
Mais il aimait *une brune* comme elle ! ”

Then he adds another scrap : “Is this *real Impromptu* good for any thing ; it was to *Susan Beckford*, who said that my verses did her good when she was ill.

To sooth your painful hours, my humble strain,
Inspir’d by you, in happier numbers ran—
So scentless gales, when Summer burns the plain,
Borrow a fragrance from the rose they fan ! ”

written before I had laid aside violets and lilies for nightshade and miseltoe. I found it among some old scraps, and now destined to the Miscellany where it will be, many thanks to you and other good friends, in much better company than it deserves.

The violet in her greenwood bower
Where bracken boughs with hazels mingle
May boast herself the fairest flower
In glen or copse or forest dingle.

Though sweet its gem of azure hue
Beneath the dew-drops weight reclining
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew will dry
Ere yet the day be past its morrow
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

The pretty epigram you give in French is I suspect untranslatable. We cannot contrast the complexions without borrowing their word *brunette*. Our English poets have (I don't know why) been so partial to fair belles that we have no one poetical word expressing darker beauty.

I wish you would come down among us to Edinburgh when you publish your book. We would be delighted to see you, from the lion Jeffrey down to your much obliged. You have seen Sackerson¹ loose and taken him by the chain so I need not tell you his literary severity covers an excellent and friendly heart. I will also tell you all I am doing and intending to do. Meanwhile I long to see the book. Adieu—remember me to all who enquire after me, and believe me most sincerely Your obliged and affectionate

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 16 Sept [1809]

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

¹ "I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times and have taken him by the chain; but I warrant you the women have so cried and shrieked at it that it passed."—*Merry Wives*, I. 1. 307.

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 17 *Sept.* 1809

MY DEAR SURTEES,—Your obliging favour reached me I fear too late to be of any use to Sadler, although it leaves me now no doubt that the abode of his father was that same Tiltey Abbey,¹ which your industry has detected in the neighbourhood of Hadham in Essex. But I fear this little spark of light must remain *entre nous*, and the world continue in darkness, for Sadler is at length out of the printer's hands.² I have been meditating a letter to you this some time on the subject of two little tracts which I have my eye upon, and which I think may be interesting to you. One is Norton's Address to the misguided People of her Majestie's Dominions, especially the Northern Parts. This I take to be that Norton of Percy's ballad, who says,—

Father, you are an aged man,
Your hair is white, your beard is grey ;
It were a shame, at these your years,
For you to rise in such a fray ;
Yet, father, I will wend with you :
Unarmed & naked will I be ;
For he that strikes against the Crown,
Ever an ill-death may he die.

¹ Surtees's letter of 2nd September had informed Scott that "in turning over an old edition of ye *Magna Britannia* that ye seat of Sadlers Master in Essex may probably be *Tiltey-Abbey* in ye Hundred of Dunmow near Thaxted & not very far from *Hadham* in Essex. I am ye rather inclined to think this may be ye fact because in an old MSS Villare wh I have by me (merely a copy of Adams Villare) I find it Siltey also Jiltey wh comes near enough to Ciltey or Cilney—change of times & orthography considered." He has, he says, a Collection of Durham Diablerie and could almost publish a Pandemonium Dunelmense—"There is a striking similarity between our Superstitions & the Scottish . . . the Bar guest or familiar Daemon of Newcastle—a kind of Browney belonging to ye Mayor & Corporation—was seen to amuse himself by rolling cannon balls about the castle close for some weeks previous to ye approach of ye Scots in 45 . . . we have a wee brown man that dwells beneath the Heather Bell very exactly similar to Keeldars acquaintance."—*Walpole Collection*.

² *The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler Knight Banneret*. Edited by Arthur Clifford Esq. . . . To which is added a Memoir of the Life . . . with historical notes by Walter Scott Esq., 2 vols. Edinburgh 1809.

The other is a Letter from Bishop Tunstall to Cardinal Pole, if I recollect right, upon the subject of the Supremacy. Let me know if you have, or would wish to have either of these, or both.

I rejoice in the progress of your demoniacal collection ; we will have a meeting one day upon the Border, and compile a system of Dæmonology, with the choicest examples which out-of-the-way reading and hoary-headed tradition can supply. I can give you the very freshest tidings of the Bar-Guest, having seen the man who saw him at York, a day or two after the execution of that horrid wretch Mary Bateman, the witch and poisoner. Her history (more that of a fiend incarnate than a woman) had set all the old superstitions afloat ; and this fellow, the footman of Miss Morritt, sister of my friend Morritt, of Rokeby near Greta-bridge, was favoured with a vision of the Bar-Guest, in the shape of a black pig. By the way, what can be the derivation of this uncommon provincial epithet ? *Bahr-geist*, in German, would signify “the bier-spectre” ; but this conveys no good sense in the present case.

I should like very much to hear about the Brown Man of the North of England ; for I am now reprinting the Minstrely, and should be glad to add a note to “John Leyden’s Cout of Keeldar.” And, a-propos of this undertaking, I have either returned to you by mistake, or most irretrievably mislaid, poor Ritson’s “Raid of Rookhope.” If you will favour me with the loan of your copy, inclosed by post, I will copy it out, and return it instantly. I should be the more loth to omit the ballad, as I have carefully preserved the ample notices with which you favoured me on the subject, although I have in some inconceivable way put the ballad aside, where I cannot find it. There is no hurry about the matter, for the printing is but just begun.

I have been spending some time on the banks of Loch-lomond lately, where I have heard so many stories of

raids, feuds, and creaghs, that they have almost unchained the devil of rhyme in my poor noddle. I saw an old man, who had assisted the chief of the MacGregors, called Them Dhu, or Black-knee, in one of the last forays. He came down to levy black-mail at the church of Kilmaronnock, on the verge of the Low-lands, where all the neighbouring farmers were summoned to pay tribute. One man dared to absent himself: his cattle were all driven off the next morning.

I will let you know when I form any poetical plan. I have not got my copies of Somers yet, but I have one of the second volume for you when they arrive—I suppose to be left at Rushyford, as before.

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Surtees, and in a warm recollection of the hospitality of Mainsforth. Believe me ever, dear Sir, your obliged and faithful,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

ASHESTIEL, *Sept.* 26, 1809

MY DEAR ELLIS,—Your letter gave me great pleasure, especially the outside, for Canning's frank assured me that his wound was at least not materially serious. So, for once, the envelope of your letter was even more welcome than the contents. That hairbrained Irishman's letter carries absurdity upon the face of it, for surely he would have had much more reason for personal animosity had Canning made the matter public, against the wishes of his uncle, and every other person concerned, than for his consenting, at their request, that it should remain a secret, and leaving it to them to make such communication to Lord C. as they should think proper, and *when* they should think proper. I am ill situated here for the explanations I would wish to give, but I have forwarded

copies of the letters to Lord Dalkeith, a high-spirited and independent young nobleman, in whose opinion Mr. Canning would, I think, wish to stand well. I have also taken some measures to prevent the good folks of Edinburgh from running after any straw that may be thrown into the wind. I wrote a very hurried note to Mr. C. Ellis the instant I *saw* the accident in the papers, not knowing exactly where you might be, and trusting he would excuse my extreme anxiety and solicitude upon the occasion.¹

I see, among other reports, that my friend, Robert Dundas, is mentioned as Secretary at War. I confess I shall be both vexed and disappointed if he, of whose talents and opinions I think very highly, should be prevailed on to embark in so patched and crazy a vessel as can now be lashed together, and that upon a sea which promises to be sufficiently boisterous. My own hopes of every kind are as low as the heels of my boots, and methinks I would say to any friend of mine as Tybalt says to Benvolio—"What ! art thou drawn among these heartless hinds ?"² I suppose the Doctor will be *move* the first, and then the Whigs will come in like a land-flood, and lay the country at the feet of Buonaparte for peace. This, if his devil does not fail, he will readily patch up, and send a few hundred thousands among our coach-driving Noblesse, and perhaps among our Princes of the Blood. With the influence acquired by such *gages d'amitié*, and by ostentatious hospitality at his court to all those idiots who will forget the rat-trap of the *detenus*, and crowd there for novelty, there will be, in the course of five or

¹ Scott is alluding to the duel between Castlereagh and Canning. "Lord Yarmouth was Lord Castlereagh's second, and Charles Ellis (Lord Seaford) Canning's. Neither party fired in the air, but each missed his first shot ; at the second fire Canning's bullet hit the button of Lord Castlereagh's coat, and Lord Castlereagh's wounded Canning in the thigh. The hurt, however, was but slight, and he was able to walk off the ground. Thus ended the first part of Canning's ministerial career."

² *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, sc. i.

six years, what we have never yet seen, a real French party in this country. To this you are to add all the Burdettites, men who, rather than want combustibles, will fetch brimstone from hell. It is not these whom I fear, however—it is the vile and degrading spirit of *egoisme* so prevalent among the higher ranks, especially among the highest. God forgive me if I do them injustice, but I think champagne duty free would go a great way to seduce some of them ; and is it not a strong symptom when people, knowing and feeling their own weakness, will, from mere selfishness and pride, suffer the vessel to drive on the shelves, rather than she should be saved by the only pilot capable of the task ? I will be much obliged to you to let me know what is likely to be done—whether any fight can yet be made, or if all is over. Lord Melville had been furious for some time against this Administration—I think *he* will hardly lend a hand to clear the wreck. I should think, if Marquis Wellesley returns, he might form a steady Administration ; but God wot, he must condemn most of the present rotten planks before he can lay down the new vessel. Above all, let me know how Canning's recovery goes on. We must think what is to be done about the Review. Ever yours truly,

W. S.

[*Lockhart*]

TO JAMES MOORE ¹

SIR,—I am just honoured with your letter and have the disadvantage of not being qualified to enter into

¹ The person addressed is the author of the defence of Sir John Moore, which had been criticised in the second number of the *Quarterly*. In his letter of 24th September he tells Scott that “the Reviewer begins with a misstatement, equal to forging a quotation, and continues the whole with similar perversions of the truth.” He considers it impossible for Scott to maintain a connection with such a publication or to herd with “political hirelings who, for ignoble party purposes, attempt to soil the fair fame of a Scottish Knight.” Later (11th October) Moore stated that Gifford had

the subject to which it relates having perused none of the publications concerning the late ill fated affair in the North of Spain. This has not arisen from any indifference upon the topic but rather to the very painful interest which I must feel in a discussion on which after all I am not very competent to form an opinion.

I am neither responsible for the article in the Qy. Review which you complain of, nor have I means of exercising any controul over that publication with which I am no[t] otherwise connected than as an occasional and rare contributor. My personal acquaintance with the Editor and one or two of the Gentlemen concernd frees them from deserving the injurious epithet which your warmth has hastily bestowd upon them and I might have enlarged upon its injustice did not the cause of your irritation claim sympathy and allowance. Had your description been in any degree applicable I should not have waited for the admonition of a gentleman to whom I have not the honour to be known to break off all connection with them not merely as reviewers a very slender bond of union but as private friends. As I should feel this no slight sacrifice whether their talents or the length of our intimacy be considerd I am happy to say the present circumstances do not appear to me to demand it. With thanks for your expressions of personal consideration I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 3d October 1809

[*Walpole Collection*]

sent him an apologetic explanation—that the article in question came from “such high authority that he had no power to hinder its publication.” Moore also retracts what he had formerly written to Scott: “It appears to me very strange that you should so misconstrue my letter as to imagine that I a stranger should expect that you should renounce any of your friends. . . . The Editor was till now my friend. . . . He has sat at my Mother’s table and been most kindly welcomed. You may judge of our present notions.”—*Walpole Collection*.

TO SAMUEL ROGERS

ACCEPT my best thanks, my dear Rogers, for your letter with the beautiful enclosure, a delightful though a melancholy tribute to the fate of poor Mrs. Duff,¹ with whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted. I dined in company with her during the time that the hidden infection was in her veins, and have often since reflected upon her manner and conversation during the course of that day. She mention'd the story of the dog repeatedly (indeed it seemed to hang on her spirits) but never dropt the slightest hint of his having bitten or rather razed the skin of her face. It is a melancholy recollection and your pathetic verses have awakened it very strongly. Many thanks to you however for the gratification they have afforded me though chastened by these sad reflections.

I rejoice to hear that you are coming forth soon, I hope your little jewel the Columbiad is at length to be drawn out of the portfolio and given to the press. I also hope to meet with another old and admired acquaintance the copy of verses addressed to Miss Crewe when she lost two notes of her voice in our rude climate. Pray do not linger too long over your proof sheets but let us soon see what we have long longed to see. I have been deeply concerned for Mr. Canning's wound : he is one of the few, very few statesmen who unite an ardent spirit of patriotism to the talents necessary to render that living spirit efficient & I don't see how the present ministry can stand without him—these however would be the least of my regrets were I certain that his health was restored.

¹ This letter from the Abbotsford copies and from P. W. Clayden's *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, 1889, refers to a poem addressed by Rogers to the Duchess of St. Albans on the death of her sister, wife of Sir James Duff, later Viscount Macduff, at Edinburgh in December 1805, apparently as the result of a dog's bite. The lines "On a Voice that had been lost" belong to the same period, and were addressed to a Miss Crewe who as we learn from Scott's letter lost two notes of her voice on a visit to Scotland in the winter of the same year. The Columbiad or Columbus as it was finally called was begun before 1797, but not printed till 1810 and published in 1812.

The weather here has been dreary, indeed, seldom two good days in continuance and though never much afraid of rain in any moderate quantity, I have been almost obliged like Hamlet to forego a custom of my exercise and amuse myself within doors the best way I can. In the course of which seclusion I have of course blotted much paper—believe me dear Rogers ever your truly obliged

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 4th October [1809]

[*Abbotsford Copies and Rogers and his Contemporaries*]

TO THE REV. E. BERWICK

MY DEAR SIR,—I must not long delay to acknowledge the receipt of your most interesting and curious packet—containing notes on the Legion Club throwing a most brilliant light upon that most obscure satire. I should not despair to render my edition truly valuable could I but secure a few glimpses of such illumination. I think but am very far from being certain that the Earl of Dorsets adventure with Miss Dupasse is alluded to in the Essay on satire in some such couplet as this—

So Dorset purring like a thoughtful cat
Married—but wiser Puss ne'er thought of that.

The poem was you know written by Mulgrave afterwards John Sheffield Duke of Buckinghamshire and corrected by Dryden who was way laid and Beaten by three hired ruffians for his supposed share in it. I will not fail to consult the book whenever I reach Edinburgh whither I intend to return for the winter in the course of a fortnight. If you come to London as you seem to intend pray let me know by a line how I shall address you there. I am plagued with the arrival of Company & have just time to say I am with sentiments of sincere obligation your obliged and grateful

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 11th October 1809

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

SINCE I had the honour to write to you my dear Miss Baillie I have had some further discussion with Mr. Siddons our manager upon the subject of the family Legend with which I am more delighted upon every perusal. I have the enclosed letter from him on the subject of the *unrighteous mammon* but I have given him plainly to understand that although in the event of the success of the piece being (from a stupidity of which I cannot suppose an audience capable) such as barely to recompense his outlay with some little profit, I do not think you would wish to diminish it, yet that if as I hoped and expected the *run* should be such as the piece deserved I would by no means depart from your just title to a share at least of the advantage such run might secure him. In this I have no doubt of his acquiescing although from the theatre which is temporary being of a very small size I fear the utmost will fall greatly under what I formerly supposed. I find that £300 is all that they give for a new piece at Drury or Covent Garden so that the players are even worse than the booksellers to the unhappy authors.

To go to what you will be more interested in—After great consultation and the best means of enquiry being resorted to, W. Erskine and I have definitively come to be of opinion that the actual name MacLean must be drop'd. The highland prejudices are still glowing though in embers and we really find it would be most unsafe to venture upon what a numerous and hot-headed clan might though most unjustly take in Dudgeon. We submit therefore that the Chief may be called *Duart* (actually the name of his property) & the Clan either *Clan Gillian* or isles-men or Mull-men or any other substitute. The reality might be in this manner preserved while at the same time it was so thrown into shade as to give no

offence to modern Macleans.¹ From the want of tolerable actors one or two subordinate parts must be thrown together but this as a matter of temporary necessity we may be able to arrange.

It strikes me that Allen of Dara whose recall from banishment so strikingly marks Macleans character ought to be one of the vassals who leave Ellen on the Rock. I have some fear also that the scene in the cavern is rather long chiefly because the same arguments of superstitious potency which are used to seduce the vassals are necessarily repeated to the Chief—perhaps they might be abridged in the first instance. For a different reason there will be difficulty in introducing the shrieks of the seer and the piper at Argyles chamber door though both incidents are highly in character and read most admirably. But when a ludicrous effect may easily be produced by the stupidity of a low actor or by his willful buffoonery it is dangerous to lead him into temptation. The dying scream of Polonius and the crowing of the cock in Hamlet never fail to be greeted by the laughter of the audience.

I do not make any apology my dear and admired friend for these observations which are dictated by my most anxious wish that the action may be as successful as possible. If being able to repeat the play were sufficient qualification I could act any character in it myself. And the oftener I have read it over the more I admire it. I

¹ Joanna Baillie replied (21st October) that she would set about making Scott's proposed alterations, "but as for altering names & all the other improvements, I must beg that you, or Mr. W. Erskine (of whose approbation I am always very proud), or any of your friends who may be willing to undertake the task, will have the goodness to make them for me." She comments amusingly upon the proposed new Edinburgh theatre. "I am very prudent & economical myself, and I am always ready to recommend the same virtues to every body in whom I am at all interested. You will not suppose after this that I have any praise to bestow on your magnificent proposal of building a theatre that will cost £20,000. Large theatres are a bane & pest to the Drama; and if the enlightened society of Edinr. has not good taste enough to prevent itself from falling into this vulgarism, we are in a hopeless state indeed!"—*Walpole Collection*.

read it last week to a plain sensible worthy couple who make no pretence either to literature or sentiment but rather consider such things as a *bore* and they were both in tears at many passages and obviously much interested and delighted with the whole.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind compliments to Miss Baillie and I ever am My dear Madam your honourd and obliged

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 13 October [1809]

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK

MY DEAR SIR,—Your invaluable notes on the Legion Club¹ came safely here but owing to my absence on a tour of visits, I did not receive them till a few days ago when I immediately wrote to Ireland a letter which I doubt not you will receive in due time containing the warmest expressions of grateful thanks as so great a favour really deserved. I understand from Mr. Walker that you are about to favour the public with a translation of the life of Appollonius of Tyanea² which has set me upon the pinnacle of expectation, for you know I am a great admirer of wizards, second sighted seers and all the gifted class of soothsayers to which I believe your hero is sometimes referred—when am I to hope for gratification?

Since you are in Great Britain might you not as well return to green Erin by the Caledonian Desert of Hills. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to have a personal opportunity to express my gratitude to you and if at Edinburgh you can be contented with a *Chamber in the Wall* (for my family has nearly outgrown my house) we would try whether a very warm welcome would extend its dimensions in fancy at least. We have Manuscripts &c in the Advocates Library worth your

¹ Swift's last and savage satire on the Irish House of Commons. "Every line has the sting of a hornet."—SCOTT'S *Memoirs of J. S.*, chap. vii.

² *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, translated from the Greek of Philostratus, with notes and illustrations by E. B. [Edward Berwick]. 8vo. 1809.

inspection and of living Lions you should see authors and reviewers without end—you shall see even Jefferies himself as Slender says of Sackerson—*loose and take him by the chain*. I shall still be here for a week or two but I suppose you will not at all events leave London soon enough to find me on the banks of the Tweed— I had a letter some days ago from Miss White safe on the Banks of Killarney— Pray think of my petition and believe me very truly your obliged and grateful W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 14th October 1809

The notes on the Legion Club are invaluable and clear up some points which I thought impenetrably wrapt in obscurity.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

To JAMES MOORE

SIR,—I am honoured with your letter & am sorry I should in any respect have misunderstood the purport of your former favour. My answer was founded on the idea (however erroneous) of your having supposed that I had in any degree connected myself with such a publication as the *Qy. Revw.* without knowing that it was to be supported by persons whose character might be a warrant for its general tendency. At the same time it can hardly be supposed that I should guarantee the opinions & statements which each article may happen to contain for which the respective authors as well as the editor (respectable as you know him to be) are individually & exclusively responsible.

I cannot conclude this correspondence without assuring you that no man in Scotland connected by relation or friendship could regret the fate of General Moore more deeply & truly than Sir

[unsigned] [WALTER SCOTT]

ASHESTIEL 17 Octr. [1809]

[*Walpole Collection*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—On receiving your long kind and most wellcome letter yesterday I sought out Siddons who was equally surprized and delighted at your liberal arrangement about the *Lady of the Rock*. I caused him send me the three first acts which he had got transcribed after his own fancy using the pruning knife or rather the tomahawk a little more than I think he needed to have done. He is quite docile however to any thing you wish, and when you have given the sheets your final correction you can return them to me by sending them under cover to Mr. Freling of the General post office who through the interference of our kind Mr. Coxe is good enough to enclose a packet for me now and then. I understand the scope of Siddons alterations and transpositions respects the conspirators, for having only two persons whom he can trust to in that department he says he is forced from mere necessity to reduce Glenfadden to a walking gentleman of little more importance than Elliot or Durand in Venice preserved. How he has accomplished his transpositions I have not leisure to examine minutely as I am anxious the sheets should reach you as soon as possible. I understand he proposes no alteration in the IV and V acts excepting in one place where he transposes a few words to prevent an inaccuracy in the action. It is where Argyle retires after receiving his daughter to compose his spirits and immediately afterwards re-appears in the garden which Siddons thinks and justly would have a bad effect on the stage and be rather too markd a transgression of the unity of time. A similar fault occurs in the third Act where De Grey takes leave of the fisherman upon the second island and a moment afterwards appears on the mainland but I fear there is no help for this. I will put all the names to rights and retain enough of locality and personality to please the Antiquary

without the least risque of bringing Clan Gillian about our ears.

I went through the theatre which is the most complete little thing I ever saw of the kind elegantly fitted up and sufficiently large for every purpose. I trust with you that our Scotch poverty may in this as in other cases be a counter-balance to our Scotch pride and that we shall not need in my time a larger or more expensive building.¹ Siddons himself observes that even for the purposes of show (so paramount nowadays) a moderate stage is better fitted than a large one because the machinery is pliable and manageable in proportion to its size. With regard to the equipment of the Family Legend I have been much diverted with a discovery which I have made. I had occasion to visit our Lord Provost (by profession a stocking weaver) and was surprized to find the worthy Magistrate filld with a new-born zeal for the drama—he spoke of Mr. Siddons merits with enthusiasm and of Miss Baillies powers almost with tears of rapture. Being a curious investigator of cause and effect I never rested untill I found out that this theatric rage which had seized his Lordship of a sudden was owing to a large order for hose, pantaloons and plaids for equipping the rival clans of Campbell and Maclean, and which Siddons was sensible enough to send to the warehouse of our excellent provost.

I am happy to find that your summer has been so well employd. I have heard much of Devonshire and hope one day to see a country which could afford you so much pleasure.

You will do me the greatest pleasure possible by your kind intercession with Mrs. Hunter in favour of the miscellany in which I am a good deal interested, and I am delighted with your promise of the kitten which I shall expect with impatience. There is a beautiful copy of verses of yours to a Welch tune in Thomsons collection.

¹ See note, p. 254.

Do you feel them so much at your disposal as to permit us to insert them. We could mention where the music is to be found and I think it would rather assist Thomsons work than otherwise. Pray remember me kindly to Mrs. Hunter when you forward my request. As a *Sandiknow bairn* I hope she will allow me some influence with her.¹

Miss A. Baillie is I hope quite well and has gathered as many historical anecdotes as you must have found poetic ideals in the dales of Devonshire. Charlotte joins in kindest remembrances to her and to Dr. and Mrs. Baillie whom we were grieved not to see. We had much kindness to acknowledge and only can hope for some future opportunity of shewing our sincere sense of it. I had the pleasure to see Miss Graham when I was at Killermont to bring home the Laird. He is just gone to the High School and it is with inexpressible feeling that I hear him trying to babble the first words of Latin ; the signal of commencing serious study for his acquirements hitherto have been under the mild dominion of a governess. I felt very like Leontes

Looking on the lines
Of my boy's face, methought I did recoil
Thirty good years—²

And O my dear Miss Baillie what a tale thirty years can tell even in an uniform and unhazardous course of

¹ Joanna Baillie's mother was a Miss Hunter, sister of the famous anatomists, William and John Hunter. The Mrs. Hunter, alluded to here, was probably Mrs. Anne Hunter, John Hunter's widow, and she was thus an aunt of Joanna's. Her father was Robert Boyne Home of Greenlaw, Berwickshire, about eight miles from Sandyknowe. She was something of a poetess. Mrs. Hunter's contributions to the *English Minstrelsy* are : *A Vow to Fortune* ; *Evening, Night, and Morning* ; *To the Memory of Cowper* ; *The Nymph of the Stream* ; *To the Primrose*. Joanna Baillie contributed *The Kitten* ; *The Heathcock* ; and *Song*. To the second poem there is a footnote stating that "music for this and the succeeding Song by Miss Baillie, will be found in Mr Thomson's Collection of Welch Airs, adapted by Haydn."

² *Leon*.

Looking on the lines
Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreech'd.

The Winter's Tale, Act I, sc. ii.

life. How much I have reaped that I have never sown and sown that I have never reaped. Always I shall think it one of the proudest and happiest circumstances of my life that enables me to subscribe myself your faithful and affectionate friend

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 27 *October*.

P.S.—We think the Family Legend should come on the stage in January when the town is full and before the dancing parties commence. I would willingly attempt a prologue did I not fear that it is a kind of thing in which I may fall short. What shall we do for an epilogue. The Speech of Argyle which is rather too long if addressed to the persons of the drama might if spoken to the audience answer the purpose of an epilogue.

[1809] in *Joanna Baillie's hand*.

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

Oct. 27 1809. EDINBURGH

IT is neither Ingratitude nor Forgetfulness, my dear Mrs Clephane, which has kept me so long silent, but that foul fiend Procrastination, which has some times the aspect of the first, and always the laziness of the other ; without, I hope the more odious qualities of either—Why we should wish to put off till tomorrow that which most we wish to do would be something difficult to conjecture, were there not riddles in our nature more worth solving, and as difficult to answer—I will flatter myself however, that you and my dear young friends sometimes think of me, and without more anger than may justly be bestowed upon a very lazy fellow, who is daily thinking of your fireside, without having resolution to embody his enquiries and kind wishes in a piece of

square folded paper. I have little to plead from serious occupation, for my autumn has been idly enough spent, heaven knows. I wandered however as far as Loch Lomond, and with difficulty checked myself from wandering farther and farther. I think the main drag-chain was that I could not hope to find you in Mull, and consequently must forego all hopes of learning Gaelic, and acquiring the traditional information with which I should otherwise expect to be delighted. I have besides still my Highland Epic in view—I have indeed begun to skirmish a little upon the frontiers of Perthshire and Lennox, into which I was led by the romantic scenery, the number of strange stories connected with it, and above all, by the inveterate [habit] of coupling the lines together by jingling rhymes, as I used to couple spaniels in sporting days— But I reserve my grand effort till I should know a little more of the language, and above all, till I can have the honour of visiting you in your lovely isle. The Douglasses enter a good deal into my present sketches which I have some thoughts of working into a romance, or romantic poem, to be called the Lady of the Lake. It will, should I find time to continue my plan, contain a good many lyrical pieces. As to the rest, I have been idle as comfortably as a man can be, when there is no sun on the brae, and no fire in the chimney, one or other of which I hold to be indispensable to the pleasures of indolence. Among other attempts to supply the want of their exhilarating influence one of the happiest has been to let my little Sophia *crune* over Montrose's Lines and hope I might one day introduce her to the young songstresses who introduced them to me in their musical dress. My little boy is just entered at the High School and my imagination like that of Leontes in the Winter's Tale is running thirty years back and recollecting when I first crept swinging my satchel through George's Square with Robert Dundas to learn tasks to which I could annex neither idea nor utility. I don't [know]

why it is that the first words I heard him attempt of the Latin Grammar should have made such a powerful and melancholy impression on me, but it has reigned several days to the exclusion of others— This is a Papa's tale, but you are a mamma, and therefore a safe confidante in so important a matter.

You cannot seriously suppose that I am anything less than delighted with Miss Margaret's remembering and writing to me—I am not greatly apprehensive of what is usually called *spoiling* even children, much more young people of her excellent talents and disposition. Undue indulgence in pursuits or habits of a tendency to weaken the judgement or dissipate reflection or blunt the feelings is a high imprudence, or rather crime in the Guardians of youth. But Youth is the season of frank and confidential intercourse and of a thirst after information which cannot be acquired without it. If this is interdicted by the parent or friend how many instances do we see of its seeking a more dangerous channel, and where at all events can it find one so fit and natural. In permitting Miss Clephane to indulge [me] with her correspondence, you pay me the highest compliment, as well as do me the greatest pleasure. I enclose a few lines to thank her for all her kind communications.

I had a letter today from Lady Hood enquiring if I were dead or alive, and have just given her an unmerciful proof of my being alive and, contrary to the proverb *not merry*, in a letter as long and as dull as this. Sir Samuel I find is just going to the Mediterranean.

Mrs. Scott tells me she met Lady Clerk, who is going soon on a visit to you—Charlotte sends her kind compliments to you and the young ladies, and I am ever dear Mrs. Clephane, Your faithful and obliged humble servant

W. SCOTT

[Northampton]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

YOUR kind letter my dear Miss Clephane has been greatly too long a heavy burden on my conscience but I should be truly unfortunate if those whose esteem I value should judge of my regard by the regularity of my correspondence. I have been spelling the traditions and my little Sophia has been spelling the tune of Montroses lines and now sings them pretty well for a little marmoset whose voice is not yet quite in tune. Your lines from *Coeur de Lions* lament are very well turn'd indeed and with this great mark of excellent taste that you have brought forward in your version the most striking and affecting touches of the original. I wish you would favour me with a copy of the beautiful lines which you composed in your rocky pulpit overhanging the Ocean in Mull. I thought them extremely beautiful and they shall not go further than the private drawer of my writing desk. To bribe you to compliance I send you *Queen Oracca* which is printed in a little selection of poetry now in the press which will contain some pretty and unpublished poetry. I don't know how it is but I can't fancy it so much in printing as I did in recitation. The anonymous hunting song which accompanies *Queen Oracca* is by your friend; perhaps you may be able to find a tune for it.—Nothing will give me more pleasure than an opportunity to visit Torloisk and if Mrs. Clephane make it her residence next Summer I have strong hopes of putting myself to school to you in the Gaelic though I fear I should but disgrace my teacher. I have not the facility of acquiring languages which I once possessed but I will promise to make up in docility what I want in acuteness. I was bred up in great veneration for the Highlands in which my father had many friends though I believe no relations. One of our most constant visitors while I was a boy was old Stuart of Invernahyle Brother in law to the last Appin

of that name. He was an enthusiastic Highlander and had followed the standard of Charles Edwd. in 1745 and of his father in 1715. Hence his memory was stord with stories of these unfortunate campaigns as well as of older times. These he was as fond of telling as I was of listening to them for you must know that in my youth I was of a very martial humour and like uncle Toby never heard a drum beat but my heart beat with it. And had I no other reason (as I have many) I should love the accent of a highlander for the sake of this narrative old warrior.

Our Highland Legend is to be playd here in January. We have disguised names etc. so as without altogether destroying the locality of the places we shall not I hope affront the ardent spirit of the Macleanes. We have got a beautiful little theatre late Corrie's rooms where I hope the insulted genius of the Drama will retire from the disgusting and riotous scenes which have disgraced her temple in the Metropolis.

I must not forget to say I know Col. Douglas of Strathendrie a little yet well enough to verify your interesting portrait. His son David Douglas was my old school and college companion and we still remain friends though meeting less frequently owing to those circumstances of connexion and cash which sometimes cool early intimacy in the course of life. I have been amusing myself with trying to scratch out a Douglas tale but this is only for your own ear and family as I have not formed any serious intention of combining or systematizing the parts I have written.

The song which Campbell gave you is I think in Ritsons *Ancient Songs*. I have lent the book and it is scarce as most of his numerous collections have now become. But I will recall it and you shall have the ditty apparelled as Sir Philip Sidney says in the dust and cobwebs of antiquity so soon as I write again. How does the Italian advance? and what is the harp saying in reply to your fingers and

your sisters. Mrs. Scott joins me in best Compliments to you all and I ever am dear Miss Clephane your very respectful and faithful friend and servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 27 *October* 1809

[*Northampton*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

30 *October* 1809

SIR,—I am favoured with your letter & have heard from Mr. John Ballantyne the handsome manner in which you received the communication which he made you with my knowlege & concurrence. As you were about to reprint *Marmion* (a work for which you had in every way paid liberally) & in doing so with Mr. Ballantyne were sacrificing perhaps your own feelings to my understood wishes I could not but take your conduct handsomely & it occurred to me as the only means of acknowledgement which circumstances have left me, that you might wish to regulate you[r] edition upon my view of coming again before the public as an original author. There are only four persons in Edinr. who did or could know any thing of my intention before yourself, the reports which have been floating from time to time being totally without authority or foundation.

I have no doubt Mr. Jo: Ballantyne will avail himself with gratitude of any hint your professional knowlege & experience may afford him.

I assure you that I think with more regret than resentment (though certainly with cause for both) on the mode in which our connection was necessarily ended & remain with every wish for that success which your skill & industry will unquestionably insure Sir Your very obedt.

Servant¹

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Monday Eveng*

¹ Constable endorses "not received till Wednesday morning 1 November 1809."

I leave town tomorrow so must send this by the penny post.

Mr. Archibald Constable Bookseller Edinr.

[*Stevenson*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[*End of October 1809*]

MR. SCOTTS Compliments to Mr. Constable & in answer to his enquiry begs leave to inform him that the following gentlemen unsolicited by Mr. Scott furnishd curious & valuable information on the subject of Sadler which perhaps the proprietors may think ought to be acknowledged by the present of a copy.

Mr. Surtees of Mainsforth by Rushieford Durham

Mr. Vernon Sadler of Southampton

Mr. Henry White of Lichfield

Mr. Sadler of Seabank near Swords Ireland

Since the book was printed off, some curious particulars have occurd respecting Sir Ralph Sadler, which if Mess. Constable & Co think proper may be yet printed in an additional leaf to the Life which is numberd in a different series of paging from the State papers—But this cannot be done before the 11th. instant when Mr. Scott will be in Castle Street & will expect to hear by a card whether Mr. Constable thinks this will be adviseable—¹

ASHESTIEL *Monday*

Mr. Archibald Constable, Bookseller Edinburgh

[*Stevenson*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

ASHESTIEL, *Nov. 3, 1809*

MY DEAR ELLIS,—I had your letter some time ago, which gave me less comfort in the present public emer-

¹ No such addition was made apparently.

gency than your letters usually do. Frankly, I see great doubts, not to say an impossibility, of Canning's attaining that rank among the Opposition which will enable him to command the use of their shoulders to place him where—you cannot be more convinced than I am—he is entitled to stand. The *condottieri* of the Grenvilles,—for they have no political principles, and therefore no political party, detached from their immense influence over individuals,—will hardly be seduced from their standard to that of Canning, by an eloquence which has been exerted upon them in vain, even when they might have hoped to be gainers by listening to it. The *soi-disant* Whigs stick together like burs. The ragged regiment of Burdett and Folkstone is under yet stricter discipline, for you may have observed that no lover was ever so jealous of his mistress as Sir Francis¹ is of his mob popularity—witness the fate of Paull, Tierney, even Wardle ; in short, of whomsoever presumed to rival the brazen image whom the mob of Westminster has set up. That either, or both of these parties, will be delighted with the accession of our friend's wisdom and eloquence, cannot for a moment be disputed. That the Grenvilles, in particular, did he only propose to himself a slice of the great pudding, would allow him to help himself where the plums lie thickest, cannot be doubted. But I think it is very doubtful

¹ Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844) continued to sit for Westminster for thirty years. He took a prominent part in attempts at reform. In 1809 he seconded Wardle's motion for inquiry into the transactions which brought the Duke of York into temporary disgrace. He was on one occasion called to order and then accused of breach of privilege. At length the speaker issued a warrant for his arrest. Meanwhile the Westminster mob began to gather. The House was garrisoned by volunteers and troops were stationed in the streets. Burdett's house was forcibly entered and he was taken to the Tower, where he remained for several weeks. He was re-elected for Westminster in 1812 and again in 1818. When the Reform Bill was at last carried, Burdett felt satisfied with what he had done. "The conservative reaction of 1835 found him in conflict with a large section of his constituency, and early in 1837, in deference to their clamour, he resigned his seat, but was immediately re-elected. At the general election, however, which followed the queen's accession, he threw his influence to the side of the conservatives of the day."

whether they, closely banded and confident of triumph as they at present are, will accept of a colleague upon terms which would make him a master ; and unless Canning has these, it appears to me that *we* (the Republic) should be no better than if he had retained his office in the present, or rather late, Administration. But how far, in throwing himself altogether into the arms of Opposition at this crisis, Canning will injure himself with the large and sound party who profess *Pittism*, is, I really think, worthy of consideration. The influence of his name is at present as great as you or I could wish it ; but those who wish to undermine it want but, according to our Scottish proverb, “ a hair to make a tether of.” I admit his hand is very difficult to play, and much as I love and admire him, I am most interested because it is the decided interest of his country, that he should pique, repique, and capot his antagonists. But you know much of the delicacy of the game lies in *discarding*—so I hope he will be in no hurry on throwing out his cards.

I am the more anxious on this score, because I feel an internal conviction that neither Marquis Wellesley nor Lord Melville will lend their names to bolster out this rump of an Administration. Symptoms of this are said to have transpired in Scotland, but in this retirement I cannot learn upon what authority. Should this prove so, I confess my best wishes would be realized, because I cannot see how Percival could avoid surrendering at discretion, and taking, perhaps, a peerage. We should then have an Administration *à la Pitt*, which is a much better thing than an Opposition, howsoever conducted or headed, which, like a wave of the sea, forms indeed but a single body when it is rolling towards the shore, but dashes into foam and dispersion the instant it reaches its object. Should Canning and the above-named noble peers come to understand each other, joined to all among the present Ministry whom their native good sense, and an attachment to good warm places, will lead to hear reason,

it does seem to me that we might form a deeper front to the enemy than we have presented since the death of Pitt, or rather since the dissolution of his first Administration. But if this be a dream, as it may very probably be, I still hope Canning will take his own ground in Parliament, and hoist his own standard. Sooner or later it must be successful. So much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *blackcocks* know about as much as I do.

I have a great deal to write you about a new poem which I have on the anvil—also, upon the melancholy death of a favourite greyhound bitch—rest her body, since I dare not say soul ! She was of high blood and excellent promise. Should any of your sporting friends have a whelp to spare, of a good kind, and of the female sex, I would be grateful beyond measure, especially if she has had the distemper. As I have quite laid aside the gun, coursing is my only and constant amusement, and my valued pair of four-legged champions, Douglas and Percy, wax old and *unfeary*. Ever yours truly,

W. S.

[*Lockhart*]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

DEAR LADY LOUISA,—I was still lingering here like the withered leaves till the last blasts of autumn shall blow us to town when I was honoured with your remembrance. Depend upon it Charlotte and I will be most happy and honoured in knowing any one whom your Ladyship values and will take an early opportunity to avail ourselves of your kind introduction to Mrs. Waddington so soon as we get to Edinr. which will be next week— The business of the Parliamentary Commission has made it necessary I should remain within call all this season and consequently broke off all hopes of visiting Bothwell

which I had much at heart—¹ I have not been quite idle though I dont know if your Ladyship will think I have been employed to good purpose when I tell you I have made great progress in the romance I showed you at Buchanan— It is against all my vows to write poetry again but I hope the perjuries of bards are as venial as those of Lovers are said to be. After all how can I employ my time— My family have some claims on my talent or half talent or whatever it is for it laid me on the shelf as a professional man when I had as good prospects as my neighbours. And here I have a reversionary office saddled with the life-rent of an old gentleman who has learned *Compte de Grammonts art d'eterniser sa vie*— And though I admit with my cautious friends that an author should take care of his reputation yet I cannot help thinking with honest Bon Acres that the least reputation can do in return is to take some care of the author. So upon the whole I will go on with my Lady of the Lake and tell my prudence she is no better than Indolence in disguise.

Charlotte begs to be most respectfully remembered to your Ladyship and I beg all kind compliments at Bothwell. I have little chance of seeing any of the family

¹ “Mrs. Waddington,” Lady Louisa had written on the 3rd, “has a great desire (like all other ladies in the land) to be acquainted with Mr. Walter Scott. . . . She was the daughter of Mr. Port of Flam in Derbyshire, but wholly bred up by her Mother’s Aunt, Mrs. Delany, of whom you . . . must speak in your edition of Swift’s works, where she appears under her first husband’s name, Pendarves. Mrs. D. was a particular friend of my dear Mother’s, & from her excellence of various kinds, and her extraordinary age, a sort of *patriarch* whom we all looked up to with veneration & affection. Of course, I saw much of Mrs. Waddington for the first seventeen years of her life. . . . She married and settled in Wales. . . . She and her husband have resolved to pass the winter in Edinburgh, as a place where they can have society and the girl [their daughter] amusement. . . . Lady Douglas charges me to say she is much disappointed not to have seen you & Mrs. Scott, but it is so short a distance from Edinburgh that she will not despair even now. . . . Mrs. Waddington as granddaughter to a Granville niece of Lord Landsdown (whose family an uncle of hers now represents, having taken the name of Granville) has a Maternal tie to Poetry, and respects it accordingly. Poor Mrs. Scott will think there is no end of the plagues England sends her.”—*Walpole Collection*. See note, p. 72.

unless perchance at Dalkeith in winter. I saw Lady Dalkeith the other day in good spirits and looking as beautiful as I ever saw her which is two bars at least beyond any body I ever saw besides. Ever dear Lady Louisa your obliged and most respectful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHIESTIEL, 7th November [1809]

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

MR. SCOTTS Compliments to Mr. Constable will be much obliged to him for a copy of Marmion to be revised before going to press. Mr. Scott will be also obliged by Mr. Constable sending him the two small Sadlers which he proposes to place at his disposal properly packd for forwarding if not sent already. Mr. Scott wishes to know if Mr. C. would like to engrave for Swift Stella's head if Mr. Scott can get permission to have a sketch done from the original Drawing—Mr. S. has at length procured Faulkners original Edition but is still in great want of Delany's defence of Swift in Remarks upon Lord Orrerys publication.

Mr. Archibald Constable

[*Post mark, November, 15 1809*]

[*Stevenson*]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

CASTLE STREET, November 16, 1809

I WILL readily try the melodies, although the guerdon¹ is far beyond the value of anything I can hope to produce. Mrs. Scott having once set eyes upon it, I am afraid I have no choice left but to do the best I can. As that best may be indifferent I make you welcome with the Ballantynes' consent, which I dare say you can obtain, to use

¹ "A suit of damask table linen."

in your publication a hunting song¹ and some verses called "The Violet," which I gave them for a little miscellany which J. Ballantyne is now printing.

[*Hadden's George Thomson*]

TO MRS. THOMAS SCOTT

Dec. 27, 1809

THE death of poor Miss Hume has shocked my mother less than I anticipated ; old age is fortunate, if not in decay of sensibility, at least in the increase of patience under these afflictions, and Miss Hume's, notwithstanding her great age, was so long, lingering, and painful, that we all regarded her death as a release. I take the liberty to enclose a bill for a small sum which I hope you will consider as a Christmas gift to little Walter,² to whom pray make my compliments. . . .

The Christmas parties go on as usual, and "commerce" takes its nightly round without mercy. I would to heaven Bonaparte would include that most stupid game in his anti-commercial edicts. I am glad to hear my little nephew takes so kindly to the church. What do you think to make an English parson of him ? it is a line in which if I live I might do him good service, and he might come to be Bishop of Sodor and Man. If I do not go to London in spring I shall be tempted to go to Ireland, taking your Islet in my way, and will borrow Walter's pony to see your wonders. My Walter is at the High School, and I condescend to hear him his lessons every day. Poor old Dr. Adam³ died last week after a very short illness, which first affected him in school. He was light-headed, and continued to speak as in the class until

¹ "Waken lords and ladies gay," which Thomson set to the tune "The Sheriff's fancy" in the third volume of his Welsh collection.

² "Little Walter" of the *Journal*, afterwards General Scott.

³ Alexander Adam (1741-1809) became rector of Edinburgh High School in 1768. His *Roman Antiquities* appeared in 1791.

the very last, when, having been silent for many hours, he said, "That Horace was very well said; *you* did not do it so well," then added faintly, "But it grows dark, very dark, the *boys may dismiss*," and with these striking words he expired. He is to be buried on Friday, the classes attending under their masters. It will be very difficult to fill up his situation. . . .

[*Familiar Letters*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[Undated]¹

MR. SCOTT returns Mr. Constable twelve Volumes of Miss Seward's correspondence with many thanks. Mr. Constable will observe that Mr. S. has marked with pencil a few passages in letters address'd to himself from Miss Seward. There are several reasons why Mr. Scott would not wish these passages to be printed—some of them reflect severely upon living characters & others have reference to opinions express'd by Mr. Scott in the confidence of friendly correspondence & which he would be unwilling should come before the public as it were by informer through Miss Seward's reply.

Thursday 2 CASTLE STREET

[*Stevenson*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

I ASSURE you my dear Lady Abercorn it has been no idle fit that prevented me from long ere now making you my best congratulations on the joyful event your last letter so kindly announced to me. I sincerely hope Lord Hamilton will find in his new state all that can render him as happy as his good & gentle disposition well merits. I do not know the young lady though she is of a Scotch family. I believe they have resided pretty much

¹ It was in his letter of 14th November that Constable said he was submitting the whole of Miss Seward's Letters to Scott before sending any portion of them to press.

in England ; but I cannot doubt Lord Hamilton's taste & trust that the union will be a blessing to you all.¹ Lord Aberdeen has just passed through Edinr. He promised to dine with me today conditionally if he staid in town but I grieve to say he has disappointed, and passes onwards. And now as to my own occupation which for this month passed has been incessant. The Commissioners under the King's warrant for reporting upon alterations in the Scottish Judicature have like every other body that I know left all their work to be done just at the time they were called upon to make their report so now we have to work very hard and the poor Secretary has hardly a moment to call his own from nine in the morning till the same hour at night. But I expect it will be all over in the course of a few weeks and that I shall have time to renew my literary labours.

I have made considerable progress in a new poem which I intend to call *The Lady of the Lake* ; the scene is laid in the Perthshire highlands which after all present the finest part of our mountain prospects. I have taken considerable pains on what I have written and shall be anxious to solicit Lord Abercorn's opinion upon it because, should it be honoured with his approbation I hope he will permit me to inscribe it to him. Pray does your Ladyship know Lord Clarendon ? I ask this question because he has volunteered a correspondence with me in a manner very flattering to my vanity so that I am a little curious with respect to him. I don't think I ever heard of him about town and I have an idea that he is in his domestic habits extremely retired. But all this perhaps your Ladyship can tell me.

What do you think of this new sort of amusement that the public have found for themselves at Covent Garden ²

¹ James, Viscount Hamilton, had married Harriet, daughter of the Hon. John Douglas, on 25th November 1809.

² For the rioting at the theatre, its causes and outcome see Scott's essay on the *Life of Kemble*, Periodical Criticism, vol. iv., 1835.

I *hate* mobs of all kinds but I *fear* disciplined mobs especially with such leaders as Clifford, who has just knowledge enough to keep him within the verge of Law, talent enough to do mischief and no capacity whatever to do the least good. I pity poor John Kemble and his little wife whom I met at the Priory. Yet they played their cards ill in attempting to bully the audience. I am not a believer in the continuance of the truce—the love of frolic will revive on the slightest provocation and there are so many people who can sound horns and dance upon benches that such provocation will be taken whether it be given or no.

Perhaps I am a little too gloomy upon so foolish a topic but I think the whole scene is a public and general disgrace to the country. Neither am I greatly delighted with the present prospect into the interior of the cabinet which reminds me of that which presented itself to a wise man of Gotham who carrying half a dozen game-cocks to the place where a main was to be fought shut them up in the same coop and was surprised to find that they had fought and killed each other because he thought they should have known that they were all on the same side. Canning is I fear lost irrecoverably to government and it will be difficult to keep ground in the House of Commons without him. He sometimes writes to me and you would laugh to see how frankly I offer my advice to him in return stoutly exhorting adherence to his old friends.

The Duchess of Gordon stayed here a day or two on her road to Ireland and gave a grand party to all the world, which Charlotte and I attended. I rather wonder that your Viceroy has not contrived to parry this visitation from *La chère maman*. She is not begging her Grace's pardon altogether that conciliatory sort of person that is best calculated to endure and to restrain and to mitigate all the little heart-burnings which must arise in every court whether regal or vice-regal.

So you did not keep my friend Robt. Dundas with

you which I cannot but say I rejoice at. His effectual interest must be in Scotland and no one can carry Scotland that has not the command of the Board of Controul, which is in a manner the key of the corn-chest ; for your Ladyship knows all our live articles of exportation are our black-cattle and our children and though England furnishes a demand for our quadrupeds we are forced to send our bipeds as far as Bengal.

I have just [*sic*] your Ladyships obliging note of the [*sic*] as I was about to close my letter. I wonder Wright sent the flowers to London as I should have thought Portpatrick the nearer route but conceived he would manage the matter better than the gardner, as I was out of town. Charlotte will be delighted to find that they succeed in Green Erin—

Your friendly interest in whatever concerns me will be my apology for telling you that the Commissioners have fixed the value of my office of Clerk of Session at £1100 ,, a year. We have an idea of making a larger claim in parliament but it is no bad thing to look forwards to when the appointment shall open to me—

I beg to be kindly & respectfully remembered to the Marquis & to the Ladies & ever am Dear Lady Marchioness Your very respectful & much obliged

EDINR. 31st Dec. 1809.

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

All the good wishes of the season attend you dear Lady Abercorn & all whom you love & who love you. Pray do not omit to send me the verses. I shall be a severe critic if they are not worthy of the subject.

1810

To JAMES BALLANTYNE ¹

[early 1810?]

DEAR SIR,—I have three pages ready to be copied. You may send for them in about one hour. The rest of my flax is on my spindle but not yet twisted into proper yarn. I am glad you like the *Battle of Beil an Daine*. It is rather too long but that was unavoidable. I hope you will push on the Notes.

W. S.

To save time I shall send the copy when ready to John's Shop.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

To JAMES DUSAUTOY

SIR,—I am honoured with your letter, which, in terms far too flattering for the proverbial vanity of an author, invites me to a task which in general I have made it a positive rule to decline, being repeated in so many shapes that, besides the risk of giving pain, it became a real encroachment upon the time which I must necessarily devote to very unpoetical labours. In your case, however, sir, a blunt refusal to give an opinion asked in so polite a manner, and with so many unnecessary apologies, would be rude and unhandsome. I have only to caution you against relying very much upon it. The friends who know me best, and to whose judgment I am myself in the constant habit of trusting, reckon me a very capricious and uncertain judge of poetry, and I have had repeated occasion to observe that I have often failed in anticipating

¹ This note is taken from the *Lady of the Lake* MS.

the reception of poetry from the public. Above all, sir, I must warn you against suffering yourself to suppose that the power of enjoying natural beauty, and poetical description, is necessarily connected with that of producing poetry. The former is really a gift of Heaven, which conduces inestimably to the happiness of those who enjoy it ; the second has much more of knack in it than the pride of poets is always willing to admit, but at any rate is only valuable when combined with the first. These are considerations which may serve to reconcile you, sir, to any failure which you may have experienced in your attempt to imitate verses that pleased you, or to celebrate scenes by which you have been delighted. I would also caution you against an enthusiasm which, while it argues an excellent disposition and a feeling heart, requires to be watched and restrained, tho' not repressed. It is apt, if too much indulged, to engender a fastidious contempt for the ordinary business of the world, and gradually to unfit us for the exercise of the useful and domestic virtues, which depend greatly on our not exalting our feelings above the temper of well-ordered and well-educated society. No good man can ever be happy when he is unfit for the career of simple and commonplace duty, and I need not add how many melancholy instances there are of extravagance and profligacy being resorted to, under the pretence of contempt for the common rules of life. Cultivate then, sir, your taste for poetry and the belles-lettres, as an elegant and most interesting amusement, but combine it with studies of a more serious and solid cast, such as are most intimately connected with your prospects in future life, whatever those may be. In the words of Solomon, " My son, get knowledge, and with all thy getting, get understanding." The stock of ideas, which you will thus acquire, you will find very useful in your poetical exercises. But should you never carry these to the perfection you very laudably aim at, the knowledge you will thus acquire cannot fail to render

you a useful and amiable member of society. With respect to the idylls of which you have favoured me with copies, they seem to me to have all the merits, and most of the faults, of juvenile compositions. They are fanciful, tender, and elegant, and exhibit both command of language and luxuriance of imagination.

On the other hand, they are a little too wordy, and there is too much the air, to make the most of every thing : too many epithets, and too laboured an attempt to describe minute circumstances. There is a perspective in poetry, as well as in painting, by which I mean the art of keeping your landscape, with its attributes, in harmony with your principal figures, and reserving your force of detailed expression for what you mean shall be the most prominent in your picture. This I think you sin a little against. Upon the whole, I think your specimen augurs very favourably of your talents, and that you have not any cause for the apprehensive dejection you have experienced, and which I confess I do not think the worst symptom of your powers : since it is a frequent attribute of genius to distrust its own powers. But I do not greatly admire your model. Gesner's 'Arcadia'¹ is too ideal for my taste and sympathy, or perhaps I am too old to relish it. Besides, I dislike the measured prose, which has all the stiffness and pedantry of blank verse, without its rhythm and harmony. I think you have a greater chance of making more progress by chusing a more severe and classical model. But, above all, be in no hurry to publish. A name in poetry is soon lost, but it is very difficult to regain it.

I hope you will receive the length of this letter as a proof how sincere I am in my desire of being useful to you. If it is less romantic than you may have expected, impute it to my being past the meridian of life, while you are

¹ Salomon Gessner (1730-1788), a Swiss poet, most of whose work consisted of "Pastoral Idylls" in a rhythmical prose. His *Death of Abel* was absurdly popular in England.

probably in its dawn. I shall be happy if any part of it can be useful to you. I remain, sir, Your sincere well-wisher,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Edgecumbe's Lady Shelley's Diary*]¹

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[1810]

MR. SCOTT'S accompt with Messrs. Constable and Compy. enclosed contains a charge for the tracts, etc., which Mr. Scott considered as his own property, and long ago cut up. If the original edition of "Lithgow" and the "Gushing Tears of Godly Sorrow" can be of any use, they are at Messrs. Constable and Compy.'s service for any time they choose, only not to be printed from and to be returned.

Mr. S. will be obliged to Messrs. C. and Co. to return the accompt.

[*Rosebery*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

Thursday [1810]

MR. SCOTT'S compliments and makes Mr. Constable very welcome to the use of the engraving which he hopes the engraver will take care of. Mr. S. has the pleasure to acquaint Mr. Constable that he is in hopes of making some curious additions to Swift's Works hitherto unpublished.

Mr. S. does not wish "Marmion" to be sent to press without letting him know.

[*Rosebery*]

¹ This letter is printed in the *Diary of Frances Lady Shelley*, ii. 49-51, ed. Richard Edgecumbe, 1913, as written "to my husband's young kinsman Percy Shelley." But an extract from the same letter had appeared in *Southey's Life and Correspondence*, iv. 20, 1849-50, and from the answer to the letter, preserved in the *Walpole Collection*, it is clear that Scott's correspondent is James Dusautoy (for whom see Dowden's *Southey* in the *English Men of Letters*), and that the date is 6th May 1811. See also *Familiar Letters*, i. 216-7.

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

[Probably 1810 ?]

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—I am glad you like O'Connors Child.¹ It did not strike me much there is a flogging up of the stile which I think is more in Wordsworth's way than Campbells & which always occasions obscurity. Look at a fragment of Wordsworth call'd the Mountain-Boy. I never saw O'Connors child nor had the least idea of the subject till a week ago. I dont think it very like Blanche. They are both mad to be sure but one in the way of the Sybils and the other *a la mode* of a Bess of Bedlam. All the notes are ready & I can add or keep out a sheet as is most convenient. I therefore trust you will make a calculation so as to inform me when you call this evening what will be adviseable in that respect.

W. S.

Mr. James Ballantyne

[Stevenson]

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH

MADAM,—I never apologise for intruding upon your Grace when I can recommend to you an act of kindness or of charity for I am always sure that the cause would advocate itself even if introduced by a stranger and I think your Grace would scold me if I did not think that in such a case as the enclosed I have as the only Minstrel of the Clan a sort of privilege to be a beggar. I believe there is now no remnant of the Household poet except the Laureat & the Highland pipers. Of the rights of

¹ *O'Connor's Child ; or Love lies Bleeding*, a poem suggested to Campbell by the flower of the name. It was published in the spring of 1810 in an edition of *Gertrude of Wyoming*. Wordsworth's poem is, I think, *The Danish Boy*, "written in Germany. It was entirely a fancy but intended as a prelude to a ballad-poem never written." Blanche is, of course, the "crazed and captive Lowland maid" of the *Lady of the Lake*.

the former I know nothing but if I may regulate myself on those of the Piper who is always the most important as well as the most noisy attendant of the Chieftain I will be quite warranted in begging a guinea from your Grace and another from the Duke to save a brother Minstrel from very short Commons. I do not warrant that the poetry will be good as the poor man has not been lately in a way to improve his talents which were originally far from despicable. But what your Grace may miss in amusement you will I am sure account more than compensated in bounty to a poor man who I fear needs it much. If Lord Montagu has not forgot me he will give me a guinea also.

I hope the Duke & Lord Whichester the gallant Lord John and all the young ladies are well especially my little goddaughter. I have got a little keepsake for her but I will claim a dinner at Dalkeith or Bowhill on her birthday before I produce it. It is a very ancient & very simple broach which I think may have one day fixd the mantle of a British princess.

Your Grace will always believe me your most respectful & very faithful humble Servant

EDINR. 22d March [1810]¹

WALTER SCOTT

[*Buccleuch*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[1810]

I READ the history of the Register with great pleasure. Some points we differ on but they are daily becoming less important. The tone of candour and impartiality struck every one :—it must I think make its way & the Ballantynes deserve it for they are men of candour &

¹ The date of this letter is uncertain. The poet referred to was probably Hogg, who was in difficulties in 1810. If 1810 is the correct date this letter should have been inserted on p. 316.

liberality themselves. I know not where they have picked up their poetical critic who is a dashing fellow¹ but lets I think his tongue run a little before his wits ; a common fault in his trade. I expect Kehama will rival Thalaba which will place it very high in my opinion. Two very accomplished girls (Hebrideans by the way or Hebredeans if you like that better) have been delighting us every evening for this week past by singing passages from Thalaba & Madoc which they had set to very wild & sweet music of their own composition—² There is something very odd brewing in France at present—if Bonaparte cannot contrive to strike some very magnificent stroke his power will be in danger for I am well assured the discontents are universal. The war with Spain as wretchedly impolitic as it was detestably unprincipled is the subject of deep though secret execration, & for some reason or other his finances seem to flag. I hope our merchants will not be such owls as to let him increase them at their expence. Yet I have little doubt they will. I agree with you our exertions in Spain are by no means equal to the magnificence of the object. Why not have a squadron of frigates with 8000 or 10,000 men upon the northern coast and a similar squadron in the Mediterranean. Thy soul is in that quarrel so completely that I cannot endure the apathy with which it is generally treated. Lord Wellington's army is I presume kept up to the numbers fit for the country to maintain but there might be an equal number at a reasonable distance in his rear. He has hitherto managed admirably well and

¹ The dashing fellow is Scott himself, who in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1808 (published in 1810), in an article on "The Living Poets of Great Britain," reviews the comparative merits of Southey, Campbell and himself, with some comments on Wordsworth and other poets.

² The Clephanes. Miss Clephane had written to Scott on 17th November 1809 : "What a poet is Southey ! we have just finished reading Madoc, and admire it excessively ; it is certainly much more agreeable than Thalaba, if not finer ; parts of it might be set to music to advantage I think. Noels song, and some other passages seem intended for it."—*Walpole Collection*.

I am told his portuguese army is daily increasing in numbers and discipline.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind compliments to Mrs. Southey and I am ever Dear Southey yours truly

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

WALTER SCOTT

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY AND FRIEND,—I was honoured two days ago with your kind token of remembrance enclosing Miss Owenson's very pretty verses to which I pay the highest compliment in admitting them to be worthy of the subject. I beg you will let Miss Owenson know with my respectful compliments that I did not write and have scarcely even read, the review of *Ida of Athens*.¹ My time has been indeed so very much occupied that though a great admirer of novels I have not perused one for many months, but I am sure that the authoress of the *Irish Girl* can produce nothing deserving of severe criticism and still more certain that no motive would have prevailed on me to give pain to female genius for the sake of showing my own supposed wit. The few essays I have made in the craft of reviewing are either of a grave cast or refer to books which I could conscientiously praise. There are I think in the *Quarterly Review* only two exceptions. In the one case I was provoked by the

¹ "We have Miss Owenson still here," Lady Abercorn had written. "She is certainly entertaining and clever. Did you review her last novel? She thinks you did. She wishes very much you did not hold her talents so cheap. I tell her you would not if you knew her, for tho superior you are yourself to all living poets you are the best natured man existing and more ready to allow genius than any one I know. Why do you never think me worth writing anything for? How I should value an Address to friendship! Miss Owenson asked me if you ever had been in love. I told her if I could judge by your way of talking of Mrs. Scott I should certainly conclude you had."—*Walpole Collection*.

Scott had *not* reviewed Miss Owenson's novel, but Gifford. Still his disclaimer is not perfectly sincere. See p. 166. The petulant author is Cumberland. Miss Owenson became Lady Morgan shortly after this.

insufferable petulance of the author and in the other by the extreme want of candour of a certain author who, having loaded me in private with undesired and undesirable flattery chose to abuse me without temptation or provocation in his next book—The worst of being supposed to review at all is that you get the reputation of writing a great number of articles which you have never even read—much less written.

Lord Melville left this country about the beginning of last month in high health and spirits—indeed I have not seen him looking better for a long time: and as he practises the abstinence recommended I hope he will enjoy a confirmed state of health for many years. I suspect he will go against the Ministry at least *not with them* in the stormy debates which are just approaching. I grieve for it and wish our friends on all sides would recollect the fable of the bundle of arrows which were so easily broken singly.

Perhaps we would [not] *quite* agree on the subject of George Canning,¹ with whom I have been for years a good deal *lié*. But I think there would be no great difference between us. The want of Pitt's commanding genius is feelingly displayed by this wretched and impolitic squabbling among his friends.

You bid me my dear friend write verses for you and on friendship. Alas I am scarcely at this moment fit to write verses for the Bellman's Christmas box—above "Good morrow my Masters all, and a merry Christmas to you," I am sure I could not soar. The pressure of the Commission business has been so constant, the meetings generally sitting from twelve till five and the rest of my time spent in making up Minutes Reports and other official duty that I have never had a moment to put on my cap and bells. The enclosed jangling verses are the only effort I have made in rhyme since I came to

¹ "I am no friend to Canning. He behaved dishonourably. I hope you do not defend treachery and arrogance."—LADY ABERCORN.

Edinburgh for the winter. They were written within this hour and are to be spoken to a beautiful tragedy of Joanna Baillie (authoress of the plays on the passions) founded upon a Highland story of the Old time. I am much interested in its success, as she intrusted the MS. with me. The principal female part is very prettily rehearsed by Mrs. Henry Siddons our Manager's better half. Harry Mackenzie author of *The Man of Feeling* writes an epilogue so the piece being entirely of Scotch manufacture has, independent of its own merit every chance of succeeding before a national audience. The day of trial is to-morrow—I want to send your Ladyship two little trumpery volumes of Miscellanies containing some scraps of my own, with others better worthy of your perusal which I begged and borrowed from some friends to help off a selection of pieces made by some booksellers here whom I wish to encourage.

It is true my new ditty is sold but the price is two thousand guineas not pounds. When I was fond of horses I learned from the jockey to sell by guineas and buy by pounds. It is a comfortable reflection that should the Whigs come in to-morrow, their gall and bitterness will be of little consequence to me. I have nothing fortunately which they can take away and am able by the liberality of the public to wait calmly until I come to possession of my official income which I believe will amount to £1100 a year.

I am very anxious the said poem should be such as Lord Abercorn can stand godfather to with credit. The tale cannot be very well sent without the verses being no great matter in itself. But I will soon send you a specimen if not a whole canto. I have tried, according to promise, to make “a knight of love who never broke a vow.”—But well-a-day though I have succeeded tolerably with the damsel my lover spite of my best exertions is like to turn out what the players call a *walking gentleman*. It is incredible the pains it has cost me to give him a little

dignity. Notwithstanding this I have had in my time melancholy cause to paint from experience for I gained no advantage from three years constancy except the said experience and some advantage to my conversation and manners. Mrs. Scott's match and mine was of our own making and proceeded from the most sincere affection on both sides which has rather increased than diminished during twelve years' marriage. But it was something short of love in all its fervour¹ which I suspect people only feel *once* in their lives. Folks who have been nearly drowned in bathing rarely venturing a second time out of their depth. Excuse this long and tedious prattle and believe me with respectful compliments to the Marquis, Dear Lady Abercorn your obliged and faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT 

EDINR. 21 Jan. 1810

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

It would be a sin and a shame my dear Miss Baillie to delay writing any longer. I hoped all *might bes* and *would bes* concerning the Family Legend would have ended this evening which was fixd for representation but Mrs. Henry Siddons has been seized with a cruel inflammation and swelling in the eyes which casts off the coming forth till next week, so I must still write in the future tense. We delayd announcing the alteration till this morning in hopes there might be some change but alas ! to no purpose. All the boxes were taken twice over and the public expectation was greatly excited so far as we can judge every person will come disposed to be pleased so all manœuvre will be perfectly unnecessary.

¹ So my transcriber. *F.L.* reads "in all its forms," which is not very intelligible.

In case of any blunder in the performance however we have taken care to have an hundred of your admirers (for their name here is Legion) in the way of highland friends ; that is through good report and bad report. I have written the prologue—sad stuff enough to be sure but I wanted to get out of the common strain of *Whilome* and *Of Yore* as for example

Of yore the hardy warriors of the north
Each in his filabeg came boldly forth

or

Whilome beneath their chieftains high command
The plaided Gael left his mountain strand
And much in love with lowland sheep and cattle
By night descended to the hungry battle.

I dont know if after all I have got into a much better strain. But I endeavoured to secure your dignity which does not admit of your suing for applause *in forma pauperis* and eke to give something of a national cast to the feelings of the Audience.

About the casting of the piece we have done as well as circumstances would admit. The players are generally speaking tolerable and perfect in their parts. Benlora I like least but he is a good looking stout fellow and the part will bear a little ranting if he will not quite out Herod Herod.

Maclean (or Duart) is playd by a very docile and anxious performer. I flatterd him by telling him your opinion of that part which had fallen to his lot, and he is to labour to secure some sympathy for his weakness of character. Indeed as they all seem to like their parts very well and to study hard I think the piece has a chance of being performd greatly short to be sure of my feeling of its merits but yet very creditably. Mrs. Siddons plays her part very sweetly indeed. She has increased her op[h]thalmia by crying for the disappointment. Erskine and I were constant at Rehearsal.

This letter accompanies two volumes of the Miscellany which you so kindly honoured at my request. You will find your beautiful *Tab* in all her glory.¹ Thomson and the Ballantynes being musical friends, have made some treaty by which he gives them the use of his words for their collection and they give him the use of some lines of the said collection for his music. In which way they have the advantage of inserting your beautiful Heath-Cock. I have another copy of the poems for Mrs. Hunter when I can find an opportunity to send them free of expence.

My little folks have all had such colds as well beseem this bitter weather but they have proved *only* colds whereat we rejoice for they have been generally attended by fever.

Dont think of answering this hasty scrawl— You shall hear from me fully on Tuesday— Mrs. Scott joins in kind love to Miss Agnes Baillie and I am ever yours sincerely and respectfully

WALTER SCOTT

22 January, 1810

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO HENRY MACKENZIE

MY DEAR SIR,—With best thanks I return the very excellent Epilogue² which makes me very doubtful how far I shall come off with tolerable credit. I am only glad the *Prologue* will come before and not after the well-graced Epilogue. yours ever truly

W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Wednesday [*January 29, 1810*]

[*W. Forbes Gray*]

¹ Her poem, *The Kitten*.

² This refers, doubtless, to the prologue and epilogue written for Joanna Baillie's *Family Legend*, produced in Edinburgh by Siddons at the end of January 1810.

To JOANNA BAILLIE

30th January 1810

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give complete success to a play and your conception will still fall short of the complete and decided triumph of the Family Legend. The house was crowded to a most exceeding degree, many people had come from your native capital of the West. Every thing that pretended to distinction whether from rank or literature was in the boxes and the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity as I have seldom if ever witnessed in the same space. It was quite obvious from the beginning that the cause was to be very fairly tried before the public and that if anything went wrong no effort even of your numerous and zealous friends could have had much influence in guiding or restraining the general feeling. Some goodnatured persons had been kind enough to propagate reports of a strong opposition which although I considered them as totally groundless did not by any means lessen the extreme anxiety with which I waited the rise of the curtain. But in a short time I saw there was no ground whatever for apprehension and yet I sat the whole time shaking for fear a scenshifter or a carpenter or some of the subaltern actors should make some blunder and interrupt the feeling of deep and general interest which soon seized on the whole pit box and Gallery as Mr. Bayes has it. The scene on the rock struck the utmost possible effect into the audience and you heard nothing but sobs on all sides. The banquet-scene was equally impressive and so was the combat. Of the greater scenes that between Lorn and Helen in the castle of Maclean, that between Helen and her Lover and the examination of Maclean himself in Argyles castle, were applauded to the very echo. Siddons announced the play *for the rest of the week* which was received not only with a thunder of

applause but with cheering and throwing up hats and handkerchiefs. Mrs. Siddons supported her part incomparably although just recovered from the indisposition mentioned in my last. Siddons himself played Lorn very well indeed and moved and looked with great spirit. A Mr. Terry who promises to be a fine performer went through the part of the Old Earl with great taste and effect.¹ For the rest I cannot say much excepting that from highest to lowest they were most accurately perfect in their parts and did their very best. Malcolm de Grey was tolerable but *stickish*; Maclean came off decently. But the conspirators were sad hounds. You are my dear Miss Baillie too much of a democrat in your writings—you allow life soul and spirit to those inferior creatures of the drama and expect they will be the better of it. Now it was obvious to me that the poor monsters, whose mouths are only of use to spout the vapid blank verse which your modern play wright puts into the part of the confidant and subaltern villain of his piece, did not know what to make of the energetic and poetical diction which even their subordinate departments abounds [*sic*] with in the Legend. As the play greatly exceeded the usual length (lasting till half-past ten) we intend when it is repeated to-night, to omit some of the passages where the weight necessarily fell on the weakest of our host, although we may thereby injure the detail of the plot. For the same reason and from the fellows awkwardness I doubt Benlora must e'en go to the Keep with his friends instead of dying on the stage. While I mention these circumstances I must repeat that none of them hurt the reception of the piece in the slightest degree last night nor was there the slightest token of dissatisfaction except from a discarded Box keeper (as it proved) who was like to have found a speedier way out of the two shilling gallery than that by which he got into it. The scenery

¹ This is the first mention of Daniel Terry, who was to become so close a friend of Scott.

was very good and the rock without appearance of pantomime was so contrived as to place Mrs. Siddons in a very precarious situation to all appearance. The dresses were more tawdry than I would have judged proper but expensive and showy. I got my brother's highland recruiting party to reinforce the garrison of Inverary and as they appeared beneath the porch of the castle and seemed to fill the courtyard behind the combat scene had really an appearance of reality.

Siddons has been most attentive anxious assiduous and docile and had drilled his troops so well, that the prompter's aid was unnecessary and I do not believe he gave a single hint the whole night—nor were there any false or ridiculous accents or gestures even among the underlings although God knows they fell often far short of the true spirit. Mrs. Siddons spoke the Epilogue extremely well. The prologue, which I will send you in its revised state, was also very well received. Mrs. Scott has her kindest compliments of congratulation. She had a party of thirty friends in one small box which she was obliged to watch like a clocking hen till she had gathered her whole flock for the crowd was insufferable. I am going to see the Legend to-night when I shall enjoy it quietly for last night I was so much interested in its reception that I cannot say I was at leisure to attend to the feelings arising from the representation itself. People are dying to read it. If you think of suffering a single edition to be published to gratify their curiosity I will take care of it. But I do not advise this because until printed no other theatres can have it before you give leave. My kind respects attend Miss Agnes Baillie, and believe me ever your obliged and faithful humble Servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—Having opportunity of a cover I take the benefit of it to add a few words to my long epistle of yesterday. Last night I was again at the theatre when the *Legend* went off with equal brilliancy. The shortening some of the scenes between the saving Helen from the rock and the arrival of Maclean at Inverara had the effect of tearing ornaments from a balloon. The piece was less elegant or rather in my opinion defaced but it rose more lightly. Our critics here speak highly of the tragedy. Jeffery was with us the first night and distinguished by the animation of his applause. He was I believe anxious to confute a dirty and unfounded report that he had been mustering a party against the piece.¹ Our Lord president as good a judge of the *Belles Lettres* as of the Law over which he presides call'd me up to the bench this moment to express his delight at having witness'd and aided the triumph of a tragedy which may rival the best in our language. David Hume (nephew of the historian) and a great admirer of the Drama says Helen is the finest model of female virtue firmness and feeling which any stage has exhibited. In short all your friends are amply gratified with your renown except myself—and I am only dissatisfied because I cannot get Garricks and Siddonses to play the very humblest parts in the piece. I believe the superintending rehearsals is very like cooking a dinner and absolutely destroys the pleasure you have in seeing your labours brought upon the board however keenly they are enjoyed by others.

Last night the house was full but not so excessively crowded as the first. The boxes were all taken and well fill'd although it was the 30th January and many as great Tories and cavaliers as myself strain'd a point of political

¹ "My *Friend* Jeffrey behaves handsomely to me; I suppose I must begin to love him now."—Joanna Baillie's reply of 4th February.

principle to give attendance. Tonight a great house is expected, and on Saturday it will be as full as the first evening. The Legend is to be acted on Monday and then intermitted for a few nights to give new zest to the public appetite. I have promised my little people that they shall attend on that evening as a brilliant reward for my little boy's attention. He is flourishing in arts and arms having gained 40 places within the last fortnight and won two pitched battles. I was of course obliged to look grave on these military successes but I am not sorry that he can *make his hand keep his head* as we border folks say—and in a public school it is an indispensable requisite.

A friend of mine writes dramatic criticism now and then. I have begged him to send me a copy of the Edinr. paper in which he inserts his lucubration and I will transmit it to you. He is a play-going man and more in the habit of expressing himself on such subjects than most people.

Our little theatre is unfortunately ill calculated for hearing a circumstance of the least possible importance in most new plays but which has been found seriously inconvenient on this occasion.

I am writing in the court so if any nonsense has slipped into this hasty letter I request you to believe that it is good Scotch Law. I beg best compliments to Miss A. Baillie and am ever Dear Madam Yours most sincerely and respectfully ¹

WALTER SCOTT

31 January 1810

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

¹ In replying on 4th February to these two letters, Joanna Baillie refers to Scott as "my brave & burly Champion, who has taken the field so zealously in my behalf, and thro' many difficulties gained for me this proud day." As regards publication of the play, she thinks "it is entirely against the interest of the Piece as an acting Play to publish it at present. I shall therefore let that subject rest, and take your advice upon it another time."—*Walpole Collection*.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I write these few lines to inform you that your laurels flourish in all their original verdure. Through this whole week the theatre has been fully attended and by all the fashionable people in town. On Saturday in particular the house was as full as on Monday—fuller was impossible and the most enthusiastic approbation was expressed in every quarter. All this while the Legend has been the only subject of towntalk where praise and censure were of course mingled. The weight of criticism falls on the head of Duart and I observe that the fair critics in general thinks [*sic*] that he gives up the lady too easily. I begin heartily to wish that the play was printed unless you think of bringing it out in London¹ and printed as you wrote it. If you think of this you should only part with the property of a single edition that you may afterwards include it in your works. My reasons are that the characters of Benlora and especially Lochtarish are so defaced by bad action that it is impossible to suppose their having the necessary influence upon Macleans mind. Suppose we had never read Othello in our closet and saw Iago represented by a very bad actor, I suspect the same criticism would precisely apply.

Yesterday I went with all my little folks who were delighted, and cried like little pigs over Helens distresses. All the boxes were full and the pit crowded. The same is expected to night when upon mature consideration we have determined that the public shall rise with an appetite though it is the common custom to let the run continue as far as it will go.

In case you have not seen a playbill I inclose one which

¹“ In regard to bringing it out in London, I have no thoughts of the kind. I shall never, as long as I live, offer any Play of mine to the Managers of either Covent Garden or Drury Lane, but if they should ask it of me, I shant refuse it.”—Joanna Baillie in letter of 12th February (*Walpole Collection*).

I got last night because I think in my own case I would like to see one.

They continued to make a good deal of effect by the confused rush of the different parties out of the castle gate previous to the combat but last night (all the soldiers being out of town owing to an election) the Campbells were not sufficiently and overpoweringly numerous.

We are all of opinion that you are born to restore the age of tragedy but that you must come down and assist at the next play you bring forward—the amputations of a player have a very raw and unpleasant effect admitting them to be necessary on the whole. Did I tell you that Argyle made a formal complaint of the flatness as he supposed of his exit on one occasion and that I was obliged to indulge him by putting a cracker to the end of his squib that he might go off upon the *grand pas*. He plays the character very well indeed. Mrs. Scott begs her kindest remembrances to Miss Agnes Baillie Dr. and Mrs. Baillie in which I sincerely join and I always am Dear Madam yours most faithfully and respectfully,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 6 *feby.* [1810]¹

The newspaper critique was not worth sending; [Mrs. President Blair has requested the *Legend* for next Saturday; a large house is expected. I don't know what to say about alterations; I should like to see it printed from the original draught.]

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

¹ "1810" is supplied from the context.

To JOHN MURRAY

February 10th, 1810

THE *Edinburgh* has at length come forth and with a good deal of spirit ; but we will be better prepared for them the next time, and at least divide the public with them. I hope soon to hear all my contributions have come to hand. Not a line yet from Sharpe or Douglas. This is the true curse of gentlemen writers. Before I come to London I hope to have at least three veterans in constant pay. I mean men that will keep their engagements for an article each.

[Smiles]

[To SOPHIA BAILLIE]¹

DEAR MRS. BAILLIE,—You honour me by your kind intentions in my favour and I anxiously wait to tell you that I have received what I shall highly value as a token of your regard. I could only have wishd that you could have prevaild on Miss J. Baillie to send her *pen* along with your kind present as my own is likely to be worn to the stumps [*sic*] in the service of the public. While a stump is left however it shall express as it has always done my genuine feelings and particularly my sincere sense of my friends kindness and that I may appear to merit them I willingly take credit for every wish to serve them when it is in my power. But the truth is Miss Baillies piece required no assistance and nothing that I could have done would have advanced or retarded its success more than I could have detaind Garnerins² balloon with my hand or helpd it to mount with the application of my shoulder.—De Montfort last night was acted with deep and powerful effect to a crowded [*sic*] audience.

¹ Joanna's sister-in-law. Her brother, Dr. Matthew Baillie (1761-1823), married, on 5th May 1791, Sophia Denman, younger daughter of Dr. Thomas Denman, a distinguished London physician.

² There were two famous aeronauts of this name—Jean Baptiste Olivier Garnerin (1766-1849) and André Jacques Garnerin (1769-1823), brothers.

Even the critical Aristarch Jeffrey was melted into tears. So you see our friend is in as full sail on the stage as ever she has been from the press.¹

I beg kindest and best Compliments to Dr. Baillie in which Charlotte most cordially joins. We were greatly disappointment [*sic*] by the cross accidents which prevented our having the pleasure to see you when in Scotland last Summer and I ever am Dear Madam Your honourd and obliged

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 20th feby [1810]

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES²

[early in 1810]

MY DEAR SURTEES,—I am deep in arrear with you ; but I hope you have heard from me, though not directly. I mean, I hope you have received a copy of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers, so much indebted to your labours, and a second volume of "Somers Tracts." The first was forwarded, or at least the Bookseller promised to forward it, from London ; the second went from Edinburgh, to be left at Rushyford. If any miscarriage has happened, pray let me know, that the matter may be

¹ Owing to the success of the *Family Legend*, the managers of the Edinburgh theatre revived the author's tragedy, *De Montfort*, one of the first series of *Plays on the Passions*. It was first produced by John Kemble at Drury Lane in April 1800.

² See Scott's letter of 17th September 1809. To this Surtees replied on the 9th November, recording an appearance of "our Northumbrian Dwerger" ; giving an account of the Worm of Lambton, "one of the most eminent and best known of our Durham legends" ; and sending further fragments of ballads, including the story of Barthram, (They shot him dead on the Ninestane Rigg), to which Scott refers. It professed to be from the recitation of an old withered crone who weeded in the garden but was by Surtees himself. It was inserted in the fifth edition of the *Minstrelsy*. In writing to Scott on the 13th May 1810, Surtees adds : "I have written to Sir John Lawson's brother, Mr. Maire, at his request, a full account of the unfortunate Lawsons of Nesham which has I hope propitiated his feelings for their manes."

remedied. I am now questioned by Mr. Clifford, who is questioned by a Sir somebody Lawson, who is desirous to know what was the nature of those misfortunes said in the Notes in the Letters relative to the great Northern Rebellion, to have befallen certain namesakes of the said knight ; to wit, the Lawsons of Newcastle, who had shared deeply in the spoils of the Church. To this of course I could give as little information as Clifford ; so we both come to you, on the strength of the old proverb, " I whip the top, and my mother whips me."

Your " Brown Man of the Muirs " is a noble fellow. He has been brooding in my brain this many a day, and is, I think, the genuine descendant of the ancient Duergar. I hope soon to shew you something of him in romantic poetry. Barthram, which is the most beautiful fragment I have seen this many a day, is to figure in the new edition of the Border Minstrelsy, of which I expected to have sent you a copy ere now ; but cannot get it out of the hands of the printer. The story of Barthram put me in mind of a little incident I met with many years ago, riding out of Liddesdale into Tiviotdale. There were then no roads of any kind in that direction ; so to avoid the bogs we kept upon the banks of a little brook which acted as a drain to the springy morasses, and now and then offered a little recess in which its waters wimpled under the birches and alders, and its banks formed a narrow and retired glen. In one of these we found a small stone cross lying among the grass and heather. It was thrown down from its pedestal, but not broken, and bore a broad-sword and a pair of wool-shears, the shape being nearly that of the ugly hieroglyphic below.

On the opposite side two initial letters, and two others lower down. The monument was obviously sepulchral. It was so small, that, with the united strength of a friend, and of my servant, I easily set it on end, where it may stand, for aught I know, to this moment. We could hear no tradition about the place ; probably because we did

not light upon those who could have answered our inquiries. As the spot is not two miles distant from the Chapel of Hermitage Castle, it seems probable that the place of sepulture was chosen for some reason similar to that which occurs in the ballad of Barthram. Barthram is not a name of our Border, though I know it is distinguished in Northumberland.

The prints in the second volume of Somers belong to Volume I. "Derrick's State of Ireland." They are taken from the original plates, in the only copy in which they are known to exist, and are extremely curious, approaching, I think, very nearly to the dress of our modern Highlanders. I think they will be interesting to you.¹

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[*Febry 20th,*² 1810]

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I am delighted to find by your two kind favours that the Family Legend has answered all your wishes. The last time it was acted the House was almost as full as any of the preceding nights, and the reception equally enthusiastic. Notwithstanding all this how shall I find words to tell that I have to-night, for I am just returned from the theatre seen a play for the first time which has made at least an equal impression upon me. What do you think of De Montfort presented to a tossing (? toping) audience filld with dread horror and consternation. Siddons acted ten thousand times better than I ever saw him and a Mrs. Young playd the Lady Jane very well indeed. Having had none of the cookery upon this occasion I really enjoyd the feast just so much the better. You must know that my eyes have seldom flowd excepting like the rocks in the desart at the

¹ The last few lines are not in the original as it now stands. They are from the Abbotsford copies.

² In a late hand. Scott dates at end without the year.

touch of the rod. But I really felt like Sir Hugh Evans Mercy upon me I have created dispositions to cry. I met Jeffrey coming out and we walked home together marvelling how you could combine so much fine and interesting feeling with the predominance of such a horrid passion.

I need not I am sure say how much we were all gratified by your friendly and affectionate reception of our efforts which could have been of very little service had your own been less than effectual. We might well answer you like Rob Roy the summons which Mar sent him to charge at the battle of Sheriffmuir "If you could not do it without us you could not do it with us." You and I are above the forms of civility necessary in talking over these matters as the Saints in Cromwell's time got beyond religious ordinances, so I claim full credit and belief when I say that your successful business gave me more pleasure than if it had been my own, because I had that confidence in its justice which I durst not in my own case have entertained and never did entertain even in those instances in which I have been most popular.

Miss Holford has a right to consider me as having got above the ordinances of civility with *her* too, for I certainly did receive some time (years I believe) ago, a copy of very beautiful verses addressed to my own honour and glory.¹ But it is equally certain that I had no clue

¹ Miss Holford's poem is now in a volume of poems addressed to Scott and other material in the National Library—"lines Occasioned by Reading the Poetical works of Walter Scott":

In yon ungentle clime whose steeps
Still frown with unrelenting snows,
Whose rugged breast the north wind sweeps,
How warm the minstrel spirit glows &c. &c.

endorsed "the above was written by Miss Holford of Chester." Her *Wallace; or The Fight of Falkirk*; a Metrical Romance, by Miss Holford, London, 1809, is in the Abbotsford Library. In her letter of the 4th Joanna Baillie had queried: "Did you receive verses some years ago from a Lady of the name of Holford? This, I believe, is the writer of *Falkirk Fight*; and I am told she was very much hurt that you never took any notice of those verses. If this be so, it is a hole in your manners that will not easily be bouched up. . . . She can set her lance at rest, hang her

given me to find out the ingenious authoress to whose name and residence I was a perfect stranger and could find no one here who had heard of either. And I will frankly own I was not altogether displeased at a circumstance which seemd to excuse me from what is to me always embarrassing writing a letter about myself and my poetry with all the commonplaces of gratitude and modesty which whether real or assumed are always trite flat and unprofitable and all this to a lady I had never seen. I must find some opportunity of scouring my scutcheon, from this stain of uncourteous ingratitude and will consider how it can be done. Her Wallace is really very fine—it will not please Scotch folks because Wallace is one of those historical characters that get beyond the reach of poetry, which when applied to them is apt to fail in a certain degree for the reasons which Johnson applies to sacred poems. But in England it ought to be and I am sure will be eminently successful and if you have any opportunity of sending to the poetess my anxious and earnest wishes for her attaining her deserved rank among the authors of the day and think it will please her to know them you will oblige me greatly by conveying them to her. She has escaped the chance of drawing the claymore in good sad earnest, by the circumstance of its not appertaining to her sex, for Sir William Cuming in right serious rage was in search of the Author of Wallace swearing that no man that wore a head should libel the memory of the Red Cuming his ancestor.

I have applied to my booksellers who are anxious to do the utmost for the family whom you protect.¹ They are

battle axe to her saddle bow, clasp her haberk & her habergers, raise her battle cry & ring her slogan with the best military antiquarian of you all." Again, on the 12th, she seems to think Scott may have felt the allusion she had made to this. "Did you think me very *misleart* in my last letter to say so much about Miss Holford & the verses she wrote to you? I hope you did not, for I thought it was right you should know it, and I did all for good."—*Walpole Collection*. *Misleard, misleart* (Scot.) means "unmannerly" or "ill-bred."

¹ In the second of the "two kind favours" (7th and 12th February)

willing to give seventy guineas—50 payable in a bill at 6 months, and 20 upon the second edition going to press. This will leave them little profit on the two first editions of 1000 each and is a bargain which I should hold a good one in my own case. But as the success of the sale will depend much upon its coming out at this very time when everybody is mad about it I think if it is to be printed separately it had better be done speedily. Should the Booksellers bargain prove too good a one I will engage my own credit that they shall do farther by your protégées whatever in your judgement shall be thought equitable.

I forwarded your letter to Siddons—his little wife received it with the deepest gratitude and I cannot doubt for one moment that your slightest wish will be their rule. But we shall have pirated copies to a certainty if we do not print soon for though the Managers may keep faith yet even an underling player has often been known to pick up from memory a copy of a popular piece though how mutilated heaven knows, and the means of getting a few guineas do not so often occur as to make them very scrupulous about the choice.

Little Charles did not cry at the Family Legend not because he was such a pebble hearted cur as Lancelots dog Crab which did not shed a tear when the whole house was drowned in sorrow but simply because he was not there. We thought him rather too young to see [a] theatrical exhibition—it is like eating peas in the bloom to hurry our enjoyments before we can fully relish them.

I inclose a few lines to dear Mrs. Baillie who has contrived to make me most impatient for the arrival of the waggon by telling me it contains a token of her kind remembrance. I trust she does not hope that I shall

Joanna expressed her disinclination to publish the *Family Legend*, but says she may be drawn to do so because of news she has received of the poor family “for whose benefit it was originally written.” What family it was I do not know, but it may have been the family of Struthers of *The Poor Man’s Sabbath*. The play was published in Edinburgh in 1810, and reached a second edition in the same year.

accept it however elegant in exchange for the *hug* you promised me on her part.¹

You talk of my writing tragedy but I am too cunning for that. I will give you no apology for trespassing upon my warren and composing poetical romances. I have been very busy of late cobbling one for the public. Would to heaven I were so near you as to read it over to you bit by bit at tea time—My best compliments attend Miss Agnes, and the Doctor without whom there is neither living nor dying in which Charlotte cordially joins. Ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT

Begun at the drowsy of 11 at night and finished in the no less drowsy court of Session feby. 20th.

[*Scott-Baillie Letters*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[1810]

DEAR SIR,—I send Mr. Jollie of Carlisles MS. so long amissing & also a *Caledonia*² to be exchanged for a large paper copy my first Volume being of that size—I dont think the 2d. Vol contains altogether such curious information as the first I am yours truly W. SCOTT

Mr. Constable Bookseller

[*Stevenson*]

TO J. B. S. MORRITT, 24 PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON

MY DEAR MORRITT,—You are very good to remember such a false knave as I am who have omitted so long to thank you for a letter bringing me the assurances of

¹ “As for Mrs Baillie being a woman of few words & a warm heart, I believe she will find no other way of thanking you next time you meet than by giving you a good hearty hug.”—Joanna Baillie.

² The second volume of Chalmers’ *Caledonia* was issued in 1810.

your health and remembrance which I do not value the less deeply and sincerely for my seeming neglect. Truth is I do not eat the bread of idleness. My literary reputation whether well or ill acquired deprived me of my profession as a lawyer in which I was thriving as well as my neighbours and it is bound in justice to make me the best amends it can. Indeed when folks bid me take heed to my reputation I am always tempted to answer like Davy to Bob Acres that the least my reputation can do in return is to take some heed to me. But I was born a Scotchman and a bare one and was therefore born to fight my way with my left hand where my right failed me and with my teeth if they were both cut off. This is but a bad apology for not answering your kindness yet not so bad when you consider that it was only admitted as a cause of procrastination and that I have been—let me see—I have been Secretary to the Judicature Commission which sat daily during all the Xmas Vacation. I have been editing Swift and correcting the press at the rate of 6 sheets a week. I have been editing Somers at the rate of four D°.D°. I have written reviews—I have written songs—I have made selections—I have superintended Rehearsals—and all this independent of visiting and of my official duty which occupies me four hours every working day except Mondays—and independent of a new poem with which I am threatening the world. This last employment is not the most prudent but I really cannot well help myself. My office though a very good one for Scotland, is only held in reversion nor do I at present derive a shilling from it. I must expect that a fresh favourite of the public will supersede me and my philosophy being very great on the point of poetical fame I would fain at the risque of hastening my own downfall avail myself of the favourable moment to make some further provision for my little people. I cannot otherwise honestly indulge myself in some of the luxuries which when long gratified become a sort

of pseudo-necessaries. As for the terrible parodies which have come forth¹ I can only say with Benedict "A college of such wit mongers cannot flout me out of my humour."² Had I been conscious of one place about my temper were it even, metaphorically speaking, the tip of my heel vulnerable to this sort of aggression I have that respect for mine own ease that I would have shund being a candidate for public applause as I would avoid snatching a honey-comb from among a hive of live bees.

My present attempt is a poem partly highland—the scene Loch Katrine *tempore Jacobi quinti*. If I fail as Lady Macbeth gallantly says—I fail and there is only a story murderd to no purpose—and if I succeed why then as the song says

Up with the bonnie blue bonnet
The Durk and the feather and a'.

I hope to shew this ditty to you soon in Portland Place for it seems determined I must go to London though the time is not fixd. The pleasure of meeting you and half a dozen other freinds reconciles me to this change of plan for had I answerd your letter the day I received it I would have said nothing was less likely than my going to town in Spring. I hope it will be so late as to afford me an opportunity of visiting Rokeby and Greta side in my return. The *feloun sow* herself could

¹ Morritt, in his letter of 21st February, had drawn Scott's attention to the fact that "you are the object of a bloody satire, I find, called the Goblin Groom, wh of course breaks your rest, & has destroyed yr appetite. To console you a little I can not say I have heard you much abused in consequence of it"; and he had also referred to Miss Holford's crude parody. "I have seen rather a tiresome imitation of your last work, called Wallace or the Fight of Falkirk, tho' not without its merit, yet still very harsh & obscure. I hear it is a Ladies work, & I shd think so from the multitudinous fighting that runs thro' it. The sex are certainly fond of heroism, & love fighting very much."—*Walpole Collection*.

² *Bene*. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour.—*Much Ado about Nothing*, Act V, sc. iv.

not think of them with more affection than I do and though I love Portland place dearly yet I would fain enjoy both. But this must be as the fates and destinies and sisters three determine. Charlotte hopes to accompany me and is particularly gratified by the expectation of meeting Mrs. Morritt. We think of our sunny days at Rokeby with equal delight.

Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here notwithstanding her fond and over credulous belief in a Creator of the world. In fact [it] is so generally believed that it is Man who makes the deity that I am surprized it has never been maintaind as a corollary that the knife and fork make the fingers. We wept till our hearts were sore and applauded till our hands were blisterd—what could we more? And all this to crouded theatres.

I send a copy of the poetical collectanea¹ not for you my good friend because you would not pay your literary subscription but for Miss Morritt. I though[t] of leaving it as I came through Yorkshire but as I can get *as yet* an office frank it will be safer in your charge. By a parity of reasoning you will receive a copy of the new Edition of the Minstrelsy just finishd and about to be ship'd, enrichd with your *Curse of Moy* which is very much admired by all to whom I have shewn it. This Longman & Co/ will send. If they fail as is highly probable—be so good as to send to Paternoster Row or call there on your next pilgrimage to the patagonian priest of Egypt whom we saw in Ironmongers lane enshrind in an old packing box. I find I am disappointed in my office frank but will find some way of sending the poetical miscellany safe. I am sorry that dear Lady Hood is so far from you. There is something about her that makes me think of her with a mixture of affection and so anxiety—such a pure and excellent heart joind to such native and fascinating manners cannot pass unprotected through your fashionable scenes without much hazard of a twinge at least if

¹ *English Minstrelsy*, 2 vols., 1810.

not a stab. I remember we talkd over this subject once while riding on the banks of Tees and some how (I cannot tell why) it falls like a death-bell on my ear. I would to God she were with us in Scotland. She [is] too artless for the people that she has to live amongst. This is all vile croaking so I will end it by begging ten times love and compliments to Mrs. Morritt in which Charlotte heartily joins. Believe me ever dear Morritt Yours most faithfully

EDINR. 2d. March 1810

WALTER SCOTT

[Law]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

CASTLE STREET 12 March 1810

DEAR SIR,—As I am more moved by consideration of former kindness than of recent neglect I cannot upon reflection prevail upon myself to change the Editors in the intended third edition of Sir Tristrem since you have requested as a personal favour to yourself that I would lay aside thoughts of doing so. At the same time as I am unconscious of having parted with the property of the work & I am sure never intended to do so I beg you to understand that I retain my right to future editions in case I shall think proper to exercise it. I think you had better communicate this letter to your partners because they may decline holding the work in question as a favour from me in which case I shall not be afraid of any charge of want of liberality for not making a gratuitous present to an opulent house of more than *two* editions of a valuable copy-right. If however which I should like much better you are disposed to consider my compliance with your request as an act of personal kindness I will be glad to waive further discussion of all disagreeable recollections & proceed immediatly to adjust the new Edition. I remain Dear Sir your obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

[Stevenson]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged by your frank acceptance of Sir Tristrem on the footing on which my letter placed it.¹ I shall be very desirous to have the 2d. Vol of Caledonia as soon as possible as it may contain something on the subject of Thomas the Rhymer. I will call & speak about this & I am sure if Mr. Hunter is really sorry for the occasion of my long absence from your shop I will be happy to forget all disagreeable circumstances & visit it often as a customer & amateur. I think it necessary to add (before departing from this subject & I hope for ever) that it is not in my power to restore our relative situation as author & publishers because upon the breach between us a large capital was diverted by the Ballantynes from another object & invested in their present Bookselling concern under an express assurance from me of such support as my future publications could give them which is a pledge not to be withdrawn without grounds which I cannot anticipate. But this is not a consideration which need prevent our being friends & well wishers.

I am much obliged by the fine print & have also received Sir Tristrem whom I shall make Mr. Weber compare with the MS to rectify any errors that may have crept into the text. I remain Dear Sir Your faithful Servant

W. SCOTT

2 CASTLE STREET 13 *March* [1810]

The Notes are quite the same as cash. I inclose a rect
[*Stevenson*]

¹ Preparing for the third edition, 1811.

TO SOPHIA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MADAM,—Three days ago your beautiful and most acceptable token of remembrance arrived safe without the least damage from its long journey. It has been the universal admiration of our little household and is certainly the most elegant inhabitant of a glass—soever since the time of Christalline la curieuse. But its beauty is its least recommendation to me when I consider the very flattering manner in which such a classical bijou has come into my possession I shall never look upon it without thinking of your goodness and endeavouring to persuade myself that so far as goodwill was concerned it has not been altogether misplaced. As for Charlotte she has been standing opposite to it these two days on its little marble slab from which (to my inexpressible joy it has displaced certain Chinese pagods) [*sic*] and making curtseers [*sic (apparently)*] in the fulness of her delight like a young miss to her first doll. In the exercise of this devotion she has got a little of the Influenza which I endeavour to persuade her is a judgement for her Idolatry. But she is *positive* that she can derive nothing but good directly or indirectly from what comes from such kind friends.

My little housekeeper joins in kindest love and thanks to you to Dr. Baillie to our dear friends at Hampstead and we have some comfort in an apprehended journey to London which in every other respect we would wish to avoid that we may meet you all. Believe me Dear Madam Your very faithful much obliged humble serv

WALTER SCOTT

13 March 1810

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

NOTHING my dear Lady Abercorn would have kept me so long silent under your commands but the impossibility of immediately complying with them. Certain little domestic exigencies to which the middling [?] class of society are sometimes subjected obliged me to send the *Lady of the Lake* to the press just after I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship & I have only waited untill such a reasonable portion of it was printed as might give you some idea of the whole to dispatch it to Barons court. It will reach you under an official cover for I have sent it to London for that purpose as parcels often miscarry by the Mail. Croker Secretary to the Admiralty & Member for one of your Ulster Counties takes care of it for you & I hope it will reach your Ladyship about the same time with this letter. It contains the two first cantos & I am truly anxious to know how you & Lord Abercorn like them.¹ If you think them really worthy of his patronage & should find his Lordship of the same opinion he will honour me greatly by taking them under his protection & I will only want your Ladyship's answer to request with proper respect that he will do so. But there is nothing of which I have so much fear as intrusion of this kind especially upon a person to whom I have been in too many instances inexpressably troublesome. I must therefore be indebted to your ever kind & friendly hint upon this subject. For if the Marquis likes the sample there is no man on earth to whom I would have such pleasure in giving the poem, & if he [does] not there is no man on earth to whom I ought to feel & do feel I

¹ In a letter of 12th January Lady Abercorn had reported that "Lord A. desires me to tell you that he accepts with great pleasure your offer to inscribe it to him, and begs you to consider it his wish without waiting to have his opinion, as he is much flattered to have any thing with your name addressed to him."—*Walpole Collection*. But Scott was still anxious to have his opinion of the poem before dedication.

have less right to give trouble considering how unfortunate I have been already though very unwillingly. Let me add how desirous I am your Ladyship should think well of these Minstrel stanzas. The deuce take my lover I can make nothing of him ; he is a perfect automaton. It is very odd that the Border blood seems to rise in my veins whenever I begin to try couplets however torpid on other occasions. I am in my own person as Hamlet says *indifferent honest* and a robber or Captain of Banditti never comes across me but he becomes my hero. I believe had I been to write *Gil Blas* Captain Rolando would have been the principal personage from beginning to end. But we are all as heaven made us and if I come to see you in Ireland I will endeavour to avoid temptation and *not* to become a leader of robbers in the Wicklow mountains which I have a notion must be one of the [most] diverting preferments in the world. You will see what has led to this rhapsody if the verses have reached [you] for Black Sir Roderick the leader of a predatory clan of highlanders is in danger despite all my resolutions to the contrary of becoming the very chief of the story.

You did not tell me if you exculpated me to your wild Irish girl. Surely my apology was satisfactory.

Politics are going to the very extremity of evil. The Pitt party who had so many reasons for sticking together are yielding up to personal animosity and internal feuds that the force of the enemy never could have wrenched from them. I am not sorry for the individuals much as I respect many of them who are ruining their own credit & interest. But I am deeply grieved that the country is likely to be delivered up to the mercy [*illegible*] who grown wise by experience will hardly be silly enough to break their heads on another Catholic question.

I hope the flowers have arrived safe. I will endeavour to get you an office frank for the miscellany as really it is not worth carriage to Ireland. I am waiting the Chancellors commands which are seldom hastily issued

whether I am to go to town or not this season. For once in my life I am particularly anxious to stay at home principally on account of my poem. And it will be no little disappointment to me to find the Priory again uninhabited. If I am called up I hope it will be late in the season & that I shall find you returned to old England. I beg my most respectful compliments to the Marquis & family & am ever truly Dear Lady Marchioness Your obliged & faithful

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 14 *March* 1810.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

NOTHING my dear Miss Baillie can loiter in my hands when you are commanding officer. I have put the play in progress through the press and I find my publishers the Ballantynes had previously determined to make Mr. Longman the proprietor of your other works, the offer of a share in this. All that can be made of it in such a cause certainly shall, and the booksellers shall be content with as little profit as can in reason be expected. I understand the trade well and will take care of this. Indeed I believe the honour weighs more with the booksellers here than the profit of a single play. So much for business.

You are quite right in the risque I run of failure in a third poem. Yet I think I understand the British public well enough to set every sail towards the popular breeze. One set of folks pique themselves upon sailing in the wind's eye—another class drive right before it—Now I would neither do one nor 'tother but endeavour to go as the sailors express it *upon* a wind *i.e.* make use of it to carry me my own way instead of going precisely in its direction—or to speak in a dialect with which I am more familiar I would endeavour to make my horse carry me instead

of attempting to carry my horse—I have a vainglorious presentiment of success upon this occasion which may very well deceive me but which I would hardly confess to any body but you nor perhaps to you neither unless I knew you would find it out whether I told it you or no.

You are a sharp observer and you look
Quite through the eyes of men—

I plead guilty to the cause of my ill-breeding to Miss H.¹ The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward's letters whom I really liked gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. The crossdest thing I ever did in my life was to poor dear Miss Seward she wrote me in an evil hour (I had never seen her mark that !) a long and most passionate epistle upon the death of a dear friend whom I had never seen neither, concluding with a charge not to attempt to answer the said letter for she was dead to the world &c &c &c. Never were commands more literally obeyed. I remained as silent as the grave till the Lady made so many inquiries after me that I was afraid of my death being prematurely announced by a sonnet or elegy. When I did see her however she interested me very much and I am now doing penance for my illbreeding by submitting to edit her posthumous

¹ "I now write to say that I should be glad to have a thousand copies printed off as soon as may be. . . . Will you then have the goodness to settle this affair with your Bookseller in Edinr. as you see fit? . . . Mr Longman, my Bookseller here . . . should be glad to have his name put along with the Edinr. Bookseller's as a joint publisher, and he will either go halves with him in the business or take any smaller share in it or no share at all as the other may wish."—Joanna Baillie in her letter of the 13th.

With reference to Miss Holford, she had frankly told Scott that his pretty excuse for not writing to her formerly "will not pass with me : you had a better reason . . . than not liking to write *one* letter about yourself & your poetry. You were afraid of having an unknown sentimental correspondent saddled upon your back, no very desirable thing I readily admit, and so on this score you will stand fully excused in my mind whatever you may do in Miss Holford's." What she had said about the forthcoming *Lady of the Lake* was : "No poet since the world began ever brought out three great poems eminently successful. However, people who live in the days of Buonaparte, need not marvel at new things."—*Walpole Collection*.

poetry most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however, is the least of my evils for when she proposed this bequest to me which I could not in decency refuse she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip. But what availed it—Lo ! to insure the publication she left it to an Edinburgh Bookseller and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertized for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer for I understand all her friends are depicted therein at full length in body mind and manners. So much for the risks of sentimental correspondence.

Siddons' play was truly flat but not unprofitable.¹ He contrived to get it well propd in the acting and though it was such a thing as if you or I had written it (supposing that is what in your case and I think even in my own is impossible) would have been damned seventyfold yet it went through and with applause. Such is the humour of the multitude. They will quarrel with venison for being dressed a day sooner than fashion requires and batten on a neck of mutton because on the whole it is rather better than they expected. However Siddons is a good lad and deserves success through whatever channel it comes—His mother is here just now—I was quite shocked to see her, for the two last years have made a dreadful inroad both on voice and person. She has however a very bad cold. I hope she will be able to act Jane de Montfort, which we have long pland.

Mrs. Baillies kind token of remembrance arrived safe this week to our infinite delight and astonishment being certainly the prettiest ornament ever seen on this side of the Tweed.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest love to Miss Agnes Baillie

¹ *The Friend of the Family*, by Henry Siddons, produced at the Edinburgh theatre soon after *The Family Legend*.

to the Doctor and his Lady and I ever am My dear Miss
Baillie very truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 18 March 1810

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO ROBERT SURTEES

EDINR. 23 March [1810]

DEAR SURTEES,—I have postponed with great & gross ingratitude acknowledging your various favours, & I have mislaid a letter half written to you on the subject of your communications, until I should be able to accompany it with a copy of the new Edition of the Minstrelsy, which owes you so much. I hope you got the Sadler tho' you don't mention it. Constable assures me it was forwarded. A Sir Somebody Lawson Yorkshire is urgent to know the history of the Lawsons of Newcastle who *I* after *you* say might furnish a supplement to Spellman on sacrilege. Within two or three days you will receive "the minstrelsy" & I write particularly not on that account but because I will put up along with it Ritson's half-printed song also his copy of Molinet's Remembrances & my translation.¹ The last is worth nothing, but is heartily at Mr. Frank's service, if it can illustrate his uncle's intention. I loved poor Ritson with all his singularities & he was always kind & indulgent to me. He had an honesty of principle about him, which if it went to ridiculous extremities was still respectable from the soundness of the foundation. I don't believe the world would have made Ritson say the thing he did. I wish we had his like at present.

I am busied with a poem at present for the good of the

¹ Surtees had reported Frank's "request for a translation of some poem which you did for Ritson. Quære was it *Les Souvenirs du Chastelain*? It was referred to in Ritson's letter to you." Jean Molinet continued *Chastellain* with the title *Récollection de merveilleuses avenues en notre temps, commencée par Chastellain et continuée jusqu'à présent par Jean Molinet*. This title is obviously what Scott means by *Remembrances*.

world & of my children. Your Northumbrian Duerguar comes in capital time to buckler by example a sort of episodical fairy tale which occurs in it. The truth is, & I know you will excuse my silence on account of it, I have been working harder than is quite good for me, always apprehensive of a sudden call to London & desirous to have my job out of hand before I go. I now hope to send you a copy in the beginning of May of the *Lady of the Lake*, a grand romance ambling on all four like the palfry of Queen Guenever. I must not mislead you however. It is a highland tale & rests a good deal on highland chivalry, not Ossianic though—observe that !

I cannot find the *Gentleman's Mag*: or supplement.¹ Oblige me by letting me know what you mean, & how I can help your protégé. If it is a subscription put me down for a five guinea touch, if I am to get a book—*so* : if not, still put me down. I owe you much—much more than ever I can pay in such a dribbleting kind of patronage. So I would like to know your precise views in favour of the decayed Aristocrat & I may get a friend or two to give a little more strength to any thing I can do. I cannot count on much in this for I am daily growing more & more a hermit & envy you the pleasure of walking out in your garden, chiefly because you can do so *sans* hat *sans* coat if you have a mind.

The story of the Lambton worm is not unlike that of the Laidley worm of Spindlestonehaugh or rather that of the serpent slain by our first Scottish Somerville, who made him bolt a burning peat. I cannot help thinking there is some strange truth disguised under all this fiction. Who knows to what size the reptile race may have attained, when the borders still so very wild were

¹ In his letter of 5th March Surtees had referred Scott to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1809 and the *Supplement* for his appeal on behalf of "the last decayed representative of the Conyers with whose name and faulchion-legend you are well acquainted." For the story of the Lambton worm see earlier and *Memoir of Surtees*, pp. 81-90.

comparatively uninhabited covered with wood & abounding with those wild animals, on which creatures of prey subsisted. As their enemy man increased in numbers the game disappeared before him, & they were at once straightened in provisions, & became the object of active & skilful hostility, underwent in short a sort of blockade & storm at the same time. Many animals have disappeared from the earth & many from the island—the wolf, the wild bull or bison, the elk, & as to the lowlands the red-deer are of that last number to which may be added the Capper Cailzie or cock of the wood in the air, & the Beaver in the Lake. If I could for a moment credit the universal tradition respecting almost every Scottish loch highland or lowland, I would say positively that their water-cow always supposed to dwell there was the Hippopotamus. Nor should I be at all surprized considering the uniformity of the tradition both as to the nature & appearance of the animal, if upon drawing some of those lochs, which the rage for improvement will one day bring about, we should pop upon a skeleton of this Egyptian Behemoth. Holding this belief I must be particularly gratified in contributing to aid the descendant of a preux chevalier, who rid the world of one example of a creature rather more curious as a specimen than pleasant as a neighbour. Mrs. Scott begs kind compliments to Mrs. Surtees, & believe me Ever yours

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—Believe me I have never in my life been so much pleased as with your kind and unmerited goodness in the matter of the Family Legend. There is a free masonry among kindred spirits (and I am your adopted brother) that always leads them to under-

stand each other at little expence of words. I shall hold myself highly honoured indeed in what will I am certain make me live long after I should be otherwise forgotten for no one can both eat his cake and have his cake and I have enjoyed too extensive popularity in this generation to be entitled to draw long dated bills upon the applause of the next. In the course of a train of life so fortunate as may make a prudent person fearful of the future I have met with nothing that has given me so much real pleasure and I verily hope to use your own phrase that what I feel is not mere vanity but something better.

The play is now groaning in the press. I send the proofs but this will not insure their being altogether correct for in despite of great practice Ballantyne insists I have a bad eye. I will gain one advantage by this that I will obtain possession of the original Manuscript which I will preserve among my other literary valuables. Your introduction is delightful flattering to us as Scotsmen and doubly pleasing as friends. Erskine is two inches higher upon the kind mention made of him. I have I understand missed the very finest performance ever seen in Edinburgh Mrs. Siddons (the elder) in Jane de Montfort. Every body agrees that she was never more herself than in that character, playing with her son and upon his theatre was doubtless one great cause not merely of exertion but of real enthusiasm. She fairly cried herself sick at her own part so you may believe there was fine work in the *front* as they call the audience part of the house. Never was there such a night for those industrious females the laundresses. And how came you to be absent Mr. Scott? Why truly I was *dreeing* penance for some undiscovered sin at a family party of about a month's invitation so flight was as much out of the question as it was to support my disappointment with patience for I expected enough although my expectations appear to have fallen short of the truth.

The young Siddonians are delighted with the distinguished and flattering applause you have given to their efforts.

I wish I was like you in every thing but politics in this free country make an early part of our education and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. There is no difference except in words and personal predilections between the candid and well informed of both parties. In principle there is and can be none. No Whig will allow that it is his intention to break down the royal part of the constitution and no Pittite will call himself an enemy to legitimate freedom. The debateable ground between the parties is very narrow indeed so far as real principle is concerned. But it is in words and in partialities that we differ and while we continue mortal words and partialities will be principal motives to human action. So we will e'en leave the parties to pull cap themselves and hope that if we do happen to be weights in the one scale or other at least we are not leaden ones.

Did I not tell you that my own poem has nothing to do with the valiant Sir Lancelot? ¹ It is a highland tale of which the scene is laid on the verge of Loch Katrine. I am pressing the printers to despatch and hope soon to send you a copy. I will take care that the Bookseller's cash is forth-coming as soon as our bargain permits. You can put it in your scrutoir and dispose it as you please. As for the prologue and epilogue I believe it is the rule of the Stage not to resume them after the first *run* of the play is over that is so soon as the performance of another piece has intervened. But do not hope you will escape them in the printed copy. If I was as tedious as an Emperor I could find in my heart to bestow it all upon your Ladyship and I am too fond of sounding my trumpet before you to be ashamed of its being a little out of tune.

¹ "I have been enquiring at Mr Longman about Sir Lancelot, and he says we shall have it the end of April or beginning of May."—Joanna Baillie, 13th March.

You are quite right as to my private opinion of Westalls illustrations—they are barely [*? basely*] devised like almost every thing of the kind I ever saw—but what would have it availed to have said so to the artist or to poor Longman—the deed was done.¹ By the way I understand there are two rival sets of illustrations in preparation for the Lady of the Lake even before she makes her appearance. Both will probably be execrable for if Westall who is really a man of talent failed in figures of chivalry where he had so many paintings to guide him what in the Devils name will he make of highland figures. I expect to see my chieftain Sir Roderick *Dhu* (for whom let me bespeak your favour) in the guise of a recruiting serjant of the Black Watch and his Bard the very model of Auld Robin Gray upon a japand tea-tray.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest and best love to Miss A. Baillie the Dr. Mrs. Baillie and family I am ever Your truly obliged and faithful

W SCOTT

EDINR 30th March [1810]

I shall send this by the Advocates cover so it may be a day after post.

¹ Richard Westall (1765-1836), an historical painter, became a Royal Academician in 1794, and at about the same date he took to book illustration. For John Sharpe of Piccadilly he designed illustrations for editions of Milton, Young, Thomson, Goldsmith, Cowper, Beattie, and for *Marmion* in 1809. For Longman he illustrated *The Lord of the Isles* (1813), Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope* (1818) and *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1822). Murray published his illustrations to Byron (1819) and Crabbe (1822). Other illustrated work appeared in his own volume of poems, *A Day in Spring* (1808), in *Don Quixote* (1820) and Southey's *Roderick* (1824). "For the artistic merit [of his illustrations] there is not very much to be said."

In her letter of 20th March Joanna Baillie had given a drastic criticism of Westall's work: "I saw a set of engravings from drawings of Westalls from the Lay & Marmion, and I was told he is about to prepare a set for Sir Lancelot. If he does so, I hope he will have the goodness to represent your stories as you tell them. His death of Marmion might be the death of any man . . . and for the broken sword he ought to brandish, if it were taken to give the artist a good rap upon the scull, it would be well employed. . . . Mr. Longman told me you had seen the engravings and were pleased with them. I told him you might be civil enough to say so, but it was impossible you could be pleased with them."—*Walpole Collection*.

[Written across the top, at the beginning of the letter :]

By the way we have stuck to the original name *Maclean* in the printed play. So I have so far altered the introduction as to say he was call'd Duart in the representation. The verse answers best with *Maclean* which there is no pronouncing unrhythmically whereas the ordinary pronunciation of *Duart* would puzzle Scotch folks.

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK, ESCLOR, LEIXLIP

MY DEAR SIR,—An uncommon pressure of business and latterly great distress in my family by an inflammatory fever which confined three of my four Children at once gave me the appearance of ingratitude which is very far from my heart. My bookseller has tantalized me with the hopes of *Appolonius*¹ these two months and I have partly delayed writing on that account not that my verdict on Classical matters is worth six pence but because if the book had been written in Arabic and by so kind a friend I should have been anxious at least to say I had seen it. My education was of a very desultory nature not from want of the kindest paternal [care] but partly from bad health in early youth partly from the interruptions seclusions and indulgences I was too much permitted to study what I liked and when I liked which was very little and very seldom. To mend the matter I stuffed my brains with all such reading as was never read and in the department of my memory where should be a Roman *Patera* lo ! there is a witches cauldron. I am

¹ *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, translated from the Greek of Philostratus : with Notes and Illustrations.* By the Rev. Edward Berwick, Vicar of Leixlip in Ireland. London. Payn, 1809, was reviewed in the May 1810 number of the *Quarterly*, where Ellis reviewed *The Lady of the Lake*. The article deals mainly with Apollonius. The few comments on Berwick's work are not very complimentary. Scott will be found apologising for them later.

more apt to pray to Thor or Woden than Jupiter think of the fairies oftener than the Dryads and of Bannockburn and Flodden more than Marathon and Pharsalia.

I took the liberty of sending under Miss Whites protection an Illustrated copy of the Lay of the last Minstrel.¹ I wished to add Marmion but could not procure the 4to. I trust soon to send you my new Adventure the Lady of the Lake which I hope will serve to while away an idle day and when I can procure a Marmion the set will be complete.

My poem has not interfered with Swift though my progress has been slackened by other circumstances. In the political tracts respecting Ireland I observe one or two relating to the intended establishment of a Dublin Bank and the subscriptions handed about for that purpose which Swift treats with great ridicule. The commentator just glances at such a scheme which he says was thrown out in Parliament. I should like to know a little more of the matter and if any one can assist me you can. The Deans ridicule is generally so peculiarly applicable that the reader loses much by not being made acquainted precisely with the subject in hand. Are there for example any of these subscription papers or copies of them to be had. I have twenty more questions to put but my eyes have been worn out with watching of late and I scarce can write intelligibly. I am truly sorry for Mr. Cooper Walkers illness ; he is a kind generous and obliging man. I have not heard of dear Lady Charlotte Rawdon this long and many a day.

My Children are thank God all recovering though two still keep their beds.

Miss White mentions some letters of Swifts in the hands

¹ Miss White's letter of 24th March had told him that the old Duchess of Gordon "made me lend her the beautiful collection of Poems you have the kindness to send me. . . . Pray what does *Mrs Scott* say to your writing about *blue eyes*? She is however very safe & knows she has no rivals but the maids of Helicon with whom thank God she must be content to hold a divided empire."—*Walpole Collection*.

of Lady Castlereagh addressed it seems to Mrs. Howard who was her Ladyships ancestress. I have taken some measures to enquire about [them] but am afraid they may be only the originals of those already published. Believe me Dear Sir Always yours truly obliged

WALTER SCOTT

10th April [1810]

This should have gone with the book but was forgot in the confusion occasioned by the Young peoples illness.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 14th April 1810

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I would long since have written to your Ladyship to thank you for all your kindness in my behalf and to express how much I am pleased that Lord Abercorn to whom I am about to write a few lines likes his literary protégé.¹ I am about to enclose the 3d and 4th cantos of the poem to Croker for a frank the 5th is going through the press and so soon as the 6th is achieved you shall have it all. It is I think in point of interest of story the best of my efforts and I hope will meet its share of public favour. I like the 4th canto myself and hope your Ladyship will like it for my sake. We have been in a terrible state for this fortnight past—three of my children at once ill of a dangerous and inflammatory fever brought on by the inauspicious

¹ On receipt of the 3rd and 4th Cantos of *The Lady of the Lake*, Lord Abercorn wrote on 6th May: "It is unnecessary for me to tell you 'how I like them' for I believe you know that you are the only living Poet to my taste; if indeed any other deserve the name. . . . I will particularize no more than just to say that of the four the 2d & 4th are my favourites; without disparagement to the equal merits & parts of the 1st & 3d. But observe that in my estimation & choice, I can never help coupling *interest* with the other merits of Poetry. As to the Dedication, I should be a good deal more vain than I am, were I not aware, that I am receiving not conferring a compliment."—*Walpole Collection*.

weather with which we have been visited this spring. My eldest boy struggled for life & it was by bleeding blistering & strong drastic medecines that he has been restored to us. The younger brother & sister were not so severely affected & we were more early aware of the danger. Still they were very ill & though I know you can feel what our anxiety must have been yet you can hardly know how much a small house & moderate establishment renders difficult that attention which we wish to be universal & yet hardly know how to give to one without withdrawing from another. But even our servants rather exposed themselves to great & constant watching & fatigue than call in the assistance of strangers & health thank God seems about to visit us again. My eldest son whom I offered you for a page is the merest skeleton I ever saw & would disgrace any decent mummy. His brother & he still keep their beds & must for some days. My eldest girl assisted her mother as a little nurse & has quite escaped the disorder. It has been dreadfully prevalent here & in many instances fatal.

I must have expressed myself very ill to lead your Ladyship to think I had any complaint to make of Lord Melville. He has always been my kind generous and ready friend nor doubt I in the least that I shall always find him so as I have never remarked abatement in his kindness and I am sure have never done anything to deserve it. I think while they were making so many alterations in the court¹ here they might have invalidated

¹ The "alterations in the court" refers to "the proceedings of that Commission for inquiring into the Scotch System of Judicature, which had the poet for its secretary . . . the Commission meant to recommend to Parliament a scheme of compensation for the functionaries who were to be discharged at their suggestion. . . . In the spring of 1810, the Commission gave in its report, and was dissolved; and a bill, embodying the details of an extensive reform, founded on its suggestions, was laid before the House of Commons, who adopted most of its provisions, and among others passed, without hesitation, the clauses respecting compensation for the holders of abolished offices. But when the bill reached the House of Lords, several of these clauses were severely reprobated by some Peers of the Whig party."—LOCKHART.

my Senior and cash-drawer and the Chief Baron Lord Melville's nephew as well as the late Presidt. and several others of our Scotch Commission were desirous that it should have been done : by granting a man of seventy-five a pension for having discharged an important trust for forty years they would have been guilty of no public robbery and I who actually discharge the duty would have been admitted at least to some recompence for my labour. But I think the Advocate my *soi-disant* friend set his face against it & I make [*indecipherable here*] myself happy that the kindness of the public sets me above depending upon his favour. It was never mentioned to Lord M. that I know of nor did the plan come from me. It was proposed by Sir Ilay Campbell as a necessary step to maintain the respectability of the situation & warmly listened to, but departed from I don't well know how nor why. So much for grumbling. But I am much more angry for our friends at their internal disunion than for neglecting such an individual as myself. If the present or any *un-whiggish* administration will but keep their ground I will make hay before the light or sunshine of my little reputation sets and I have always my official emoluments to look to one day for the deuce is in it if a man twice my age outlive me after all. But I detest the Whigs with a cordial detestation and the bilious fits which I should experience under their domination, would I am convinced get the better of me.

Now here comes a great request. Your friend Lady Castlereagh has I am told a numerous collection of original letters of Swift written to her Ancestress Mrs. Howard the favourite of Queen Caroline. Now this may not be true but it bears a very probable face—I am informed Lord Leitrim has seen them—there are letters (it [is] said) to Queen Caroline (I presume while Princess of Wales) to Mrs. Howard and to Pope—Now do you think Lady Castlereagh's countenance will so much belie the goodnature which with beauty is its distinguishing

characteristic as to refuse me copies of these letters?¹ I will take such care of them as has never been taken of anything in this world and you need not tell Lady C. that I am an old friend of Canning since I am sure I am [a] sincere well-wisher to Lord Castlereagh whose conduct since that unfortunate quarrel has been so manly generous and patriotic—Do dear Lady write and let me know what I can expect about these same letters—not that there is any hurry only that I am impatient to know if the whole be not one grand blunder or quizz.—I fear there is now no chance of my being soon in England and indeed in the present state of my family it is altogether undesirable

I am sorry for the miscarriage of the flower roots which unless the gardner [*sic*] at the Priory has set them . . . must be good for nothing. You say nothing of the fair Novelist Miss Owenson. Surely she is not inexorable [*MS. sewn in here*].—Believe me, my dear Lady Abercorn, your Ladyship's truly obliged and faithful,

WALTER SCOTT

I am hopeless of profiting by the pamphlets on the Fiorin Grass, being a wretched & most unwilling farmer. But if your Ladyship sends them to me they will give me consequence with all the Agriculturists in Selkirkshire. So pray do—if not extremely big either Croker or Francis Freling Genl. Post Office will forward them for me if sent under their cover.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I am very sorry to say you must take belt & sword after all²—Anne is still very unwell, my

¹ Lady Castlereagh did not lend the letters, which is the cause of Sharpe's angry reference in the letter of June 1812. "That b——h Lady Castle-reagh—you should claw her off soundly in a note or in the preface, were it only on account of the common cause of letters."

² *i.e.* represent the Sheriff-Depute at the Jedburgh Circuit Court.

wife uneasy & Sophia we think about to take the same complaint—the rest are recovering very slowly—Lord Meadowbank¹ has kindly sent to say he will be satisfied with your attendance & will make it as light as possible. This will also be convenient to enable me to get out my new poem which we are printing very hard and as Lord Meadowbank volunteered to excuse me I hope you will excuse me also. Believe me very kindly Yours

EDINR. 22d. April 1810

WALTER SCOTT

[Horne & Lyell]²

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

[April-May 1810]

DEAR JAMES,—I send the grand *finale*, and so exit the Lady of the Lake from the head she has tormented for six months. In canto VI. stanza 21,—*stern* and still, read *grim* and still; *sternly* occurs four lines higher. For a similar reason, stanza 24—*dun* deer, read *fleet*-deer. I will probably call this morning. Yours truly,

W. S.

[*Abbotsford Copies and Note at the close of
The Lady of the Lake*]

TO JOHN WILSON CROKER

MY DEAR SIR,—A thousand thanks for your kind billet. To avail ourselves of your invaluable support in the House it is necessary to mention to you the present state of the business. The Advocate finding I believe that the opposition of filling up the amount of our compensation for our dues of office in the inadequate manner recommended by the report of the commission was likely to meet with opposition which he would find it difficult

¹ That is Allan Maconochie, Lord Meadowbank (1796).

² This letter is preserved at No. 39 North Castle Street, formerly Scott's house, now the offices of Horne & Lyell, W.S. In 1826 Donald Horne was chairman of the commission of Scott's creditors. See *Journal*, 27 Jany., 1828.

to overcome has proposed in lieu thereof a reference of our claims to the court of Exchequer in Scotland.¹ Now to this our objection is twofold. 1st That if the remit be thus made generally the Court of Exchequer would not hesitate to adopt the report of the Commission sanctioned by such high authority & possessing the concurrence of two of the six judges of that Court who being Commissioners are prejudicated by that very report. If the clause instead of being general were so worded as to measure the compensation by the amount of *our fees of Office as now by law exigible* much of our objection would be removed because the unjust principle of measuring our claim by the receipts of distant years under a most inadequate system of collection would be departed from. But we hope and trust the House with the evidence before them which is full and complete and within ten lines ; ready also to be verified on oath at their bar will decide themselves upon the amount of what is due to us. Or if we are to go to a Scottish Court why not to the Court of Session of which we are officers and where the extent of our dues is well known and recognised. In fact the Excheqr. in Scotland has been most unfavourable in such cases. I know not from what spirit of public parsimony but their proceedings have given rise to the most clamorous complaints both from Quaternary meetings and Sheriffs. As one instance out of many, there was a woman sent to be hung in Fife. The Sheriff had not only the disagreeable duty of seeing the ceremony

¹ In his reply of 10th May Croker wrote : " I fancy I did not do amiss in preventing actual hostilities by magnifying to the Advocate the strength of his opponents. I told him that Adam would bring down the whole opposition, that Canning & his middle men would occupy the centre, & that I & the Irish kerns would bring up the rear, besides which every man who ever tagged a rhyme or read one would join us to oppose the plunder of a poet. . . . I hope you approve the [*illegible*] in terms which I do not understand, for like William of Deloraine I was content to do as I was bid without troubling my head about the meaning or the consequences ; all I knew was that a gross injustice was intended & that it was my duty to oppose it, as those who knew the forms of the matter thought most expedient for the success of the good object."—*Walpole Collection*.

performed but the pleasure of paying for a handsome new patent Gallows out of his own pocket for which he was not allowed one penny in his crown-accompts, the Barons saying he might have hung her on a tree. The Advocate used to be loud enough upon such subjects when Sheriff of Perthshire. I myself had occasion to bring some witnesses *from England* to hang a horse-stealer—The people would not come for the usual sum allowed them for expenses on the road and as they were not liable to be compelled I had no alternative but to give them a little more to induce them to appear on the trial. They came and convicted the man but I was obliged to pay the difference myself as Sheriff of Selkirkshire.

Excuse me troubling you with all these details especially as Colin Mackenzie who lies leiger for us in town will be able and anxious to give you more full information. On Friday I shall [send] a copy of the *Lady of the Lake* for you and I will avail myself of your cover to send one to Canning. Believe me, Very truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 1st May, 1810.

[*Brotherton*]

TO LADY DALKEITH

MY DEAR LADY DALKEITH,—Accept with my best respects & with your Ladyships usual indulgence a copy of the *Lady of [the] Lake* a *Lady* of whom I am as heartily tired as ever I was of indifferent company & who nevertheless trusting more to your goodness than to her desert I hope may find some grace in your Ladyships eyes. There are two copies in the same parcel one for Lady Douglas, one for your Ladyships neighbour Mrs. Robert Dundas. I hope the distance being short you will permit one of the green merry men to deliver it in Downing Street.

The weather here has been very severe especially among children. All mine have been deplorably ill but are now

thank God recovering. I hope your Ladyships nursery escaped the disorder which was something like an influenza. I beg my most respectfully [*sic*] compliments to the Lord of Tyndale & thanks for his kind attention to my request by which he will befriend me in a most essential particular. Believe me with deep respect & regard Ever your Ladyships most obedient & obliged humble Servant

EDINR. 7 May [1810]

WALTER SCOTT

[*Buccleuch*]

TO LADY ALVANLEY ¹

MY DEAR LADY ALVANLEY,—As a very slight tribute of gratitude for the uncommonly kind & flattering attention with which your Ladyship was pleased to honor Mrs. Scott & me when in town last spring I have used the freedom to send for your Ladyship's acceptance a poetical romance which I have just intruded upon the public. It goes by this days Maill Coach to the care of Messrs. Longman & Co Booksellers in Paternoster Row near St. Pauls. I mention that because Your Ladyship thought of shifting your residence from Great George Street so I could only give the general direction *London*.

Mrs. Scott joins me in respectful Compliments to Miss Arden & with a great sense of all your Ladyship's kindness I am with great respect Your Ladyship's honoured & obliged humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 7th May 1810.

[*Hansard Watt*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—Our design of going to town has been broken by various accidents and latterly by the illness of our whole nursery. A kind of feverish

¹ See vol. iii. p. 122.

complaint has run through all my children except the eldest girl and assumed at one period a threatening aspect being accompanied with pain in the side and other inflammatory symptoms which gave way however to bleeding and blisters. We are now all upon foot again but the shadows of what we were and the chin-cough has succeeded to the cold and fever. I cannot say I am very sorry as the season is favourable and this is one of the toll-bars which they must pass in their entrance to life and the sooner it is over the better. I have no prospect *now* of being in London soon but the next time I come I am much tempted by your kind offer of a harbour for Sophia to bring her with me. She is a clever and tractable child very capable of improving by what she sees and hears and I would think a week or two of your society a most important advantage indeed. Early travelling in some respects is of advantage, it opens the ideas of children and if their companions will have patience to hear and answer their questions it is perhaps the highest possible enjoyment you can give them.

To quit the actual nursery and come to our literary offspring. You must know that my young babe is born in the shape of a comely quarto. Two or three days since I addressed a copy for you to be left at Dr Baillies. In case it has not appeared you will be kind enough to cause enquiry to be made at Mr Miller Bookseller in Albemarle Street to whose care it was addrest. I shall be impatient to hear if it has given you any amusement & if it has been so fortunate—a fido for the critics— This accompanies a copy of the Family Legend which I learn with surprize has not been forwarded to you. It is positively more delightful in reading than in representation. Lord Meadowbank came in here yesterday with his eyes streaming from the perusal and fetching tears from an old metaphysical lawyer and a Scotchman beside is something like the miracle of Moses's rod in the wilderness. The sale has been very much to the book-

sellers satisfaction—four fifths of the quantity retained in Scotland are already sold & the rest daily going off.

James Grahame has returned to Scotland. His wife is at present in town making interest to get him appointed preacher to the Chapel in Queen Street and I am moving heaven and earth to help her. But I fear he has been too late of starting since I find many of the most sweet voices are already engaged in behalf of other [*sic*] He is a worthy modest and most ingenious man—ill calculated I fear to beat up against wind and tide which on this occasion seem to set in against him, but still I dont renounce hope of success. I have not heard why he left the living in England but suppose he did not quite find the climate agree with him.¹

I must break off having a great deal to do. Our Session is about to set down my own duty as some thing in arrear, one of my colleagues is absent in London and another detain'd by family distress so I have more than

¹ This letter and one from Joanna Baillie must have crossed, as hers is dated the same date. Curiously enough they both touch on the topic of James Grahame in this cross correspondence. She says she has just "received a letter from your old neighbour, Graham the Poet, the Sabbath Graham I mean, telling us that he is Candidate for the Lectureship of St. Georges Chapel Edinr. . . . and begging me to write to you entreating your good offices on his behalf. . . . I own I do not think him wise in desiring such preferment, as he has been so much encouraged by many of the higher Clergymen in this country that I think he has a good chance of getting a living here, were he to remain with us, at the same time, he is old enough to judge for himself." Then on the 13th, when acknowledging the copy of *The Lady of the Lake*, she gives a reason why Grahame wishes to give up the English living: "I am glad to hear you are doing what you can for Mr Graham, even tho' the tide should set against him. . . . He was tormented last Winter with rheumatism, and found the duties of his curacy, particularly the funerals which obliged him to stand bare-headed in the Church yard in cold weather, too much for him."—*Walpole Collection*.

On account of his seeing little success in following an advocate's career, Grahame went from Edinburgh to London in 1809, when he realised his early ambition to enter the Church and was ordained by the Bishop of Norwich. It was the curacy of Shipton Moyne, Gloucestershire, he left in April 1810 to attend family affairs in Edinburgh. His candidature for St. George's Chapel was unsuccessful. In August of this year he was appointed sub-curate of St. Margaret's, Durham, and, after a short time at Sedgfield, he returned to Edinburgh owing to ill-health and proceeded to his brother's residence at Glasgow, where he died.

enough upon my hands. Charlotte joins in kind love to Miss A. Baillie to the Doctor and his Lady and I ever am My dear Miss Baillie most faithfully yours

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 7 May [1810]

I inclose a few lines for Mr Coxe.

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

To [LADY STAFFORD]

MADAM,—I have the honour to send by the coach a volume which in point of printing & paper at least may claim a place in your valuable collection and I have been anxious to select a copy which in these respects may not disgrace your shelves though they hold some of the most beautiful & curious books in England. But for the matter of the volume I must invoke all your Ladyships partialities & prejudices in my favour, as a Highland Chieftainess, a Scottish Countess & if you will permit me so much honour, as a friend of the rhymers and I fear that with all these to aid it may be weighed in the balance & found wanting—not in point of weight Heaven knows but in point of merit. Such as my *Lady of the Lake* is

to you & to your honour I commit her¹

And with her this—

Meaning thereby this letter which perhaps requires an apology although it is meant to contain one.

I have [been] disappointed by various circumstances from paying my respects at Cleveland House this season which I once thought would have been in my power. But my family have been very ill, & besides my Lord

¹ Lady Stafford replies on the 14th: "My attachment to my own country is justified by her having such a Poet to preserve the memory of her histories & to describe her beauties in such a manner that I may truly say to Scotland,

"Oh fortunata, che sì chiara tromba
Trovasti! E chi, di te sì alto savisse!"—*Walpole Collection.*

Advocate who has certain points to carry against my brethren & myself has intrigued a little to detain me where I am—at least I cannot help suspecting so much.

I have taken the liberty to address a few lines to your Ladyship to beg a ticket of admission to the gallery for a female artist a Miss Auchterlony a respectable & amiable woman who has been reduced by the extravagance of her father & brothers to cultivate a talent for painting for her subsistence which she once made an amusement. She comes to London on purpose to look at pictures & I do not know any Collection she can see with so much pleasure & advantage. I don't think a very great deal of her genius which is of that unfortunate kind at least at present which hovers between talent & accomplishment & would therefore have graced the situation she was born to, but I am afraid will hardly give her distinction as an artist.

I hope Lady Hood is well—and I beg to be respectfully remembered to the Marquis. I am with the greatest respect Madam Your Ladyships obliged & respectful humble Servt.

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 8 May [1810 ?]

[*Edin. Univ. Lib.*]

To THOMAS SCOTT

[Extract]

13th May 1810

. . . I AM truly sorry for the reduction of the Militia,¹ yet it is but an idle man's employment, and though the immediate loss be severe, I would fain hope you may, with your talents, find a more lucrative and active sphere of exertion. I have not been quite idle myself, for my situation makes it necessary that I should labour. My

¹ The reduction of the Manx Fencibles threw Tom out of work again. See before, p. 74. He left the Isle of Man in 1810, and in 1811 was appointed Paymaster to the 70th Regiment, which in 1813 he accompanied to Canada. We shall find references to the matter in the letters presently.

last effort has been a new poem, of which I expect to have a copy for you in a week or two. . . .

There is no news here worth telling. Your old friend Bailie Coulter died in his glorious year of Provostry, and was buried as doubtless he would have wished to be, only that Messrs. Young and Trotter, his opponents in the Council, were intrusted with the charge of solemnising his rites of sepulture.

Matters look serious in London, and I fear infinite pains has been taken to infect the Foot Guards with democratic principles. I hope they will have the prudence to send them in an army to Portugal, and replace them with regular marching regiments, less subject from their constitution and discipline to popular contagion. I wish they may have no occasion to regret disbanding Militia and Volunteers. Yet the sense of the generality of the people is so sound that I cannot bring myself to have serious apprehensions. We are beginning to kindle here in a little degree. All reminds me of an exclamation of the French as recorded in their old history, "Tanneguy du Châtel, où es-tu?" What is become of William Pitt? It is astonishing how the loss of one man has deranged the wisdom and disorganised the force of this mighty people. You and I, with wives and children, and seventeen years added to our lives, will hardly scramble so well as we might have done in 1793-4 when the same game was playing.

I was much obliged to you for your curious notices about the remnant of old customs in the Isle of Man. I am surprised their song of triumph over the wren¹ is in

¹ "On the 24th of December, towards evening, all the servants in general have a holiday; they go not to bed all night, but ramble about till the bells ring in all the churches, which is at twelve o'clock; prayers being over, they go to hunt the wren, and after having found one of these poor birds, they kill her, and lay her on a bier with the utmost solemnity, bringing her to the parish church and burying her with a whimsical kind of solemnity, singing dirges over her in the Manx language, which they call her knell; after which Christmas begins."—Quotation from Waldron's *Description of the Isle of Man*, folio, 1631, in Note E in *Peveril of the Peak*.

English. I remember to have heard verses of it, and if I mistake not, the whole is in Johnson's collection of Scotch songs and music.¹ Burns, who assisted Johnson, may have picked it up in Dumfriesshire. As your residence in so curious a place must have furnished you with many miscellaneous remarks, I wish you would throw them into the shape of a little Essay and send it to me for the *Register*, of which I am a proprietor. . . .—I ever am, yours affectionately,

W. S.

[*Familiar Letters*]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

MY DEAR MISS CLEPHANE,—You must with your friendly goodness excuse the laziness of my fingers in consideration of the hard duty to which they have been lately subjected in their editorial authorial and official capacity. At times the quantity of ink which I am obliged to shed weighs upon my conscience like Lady Macbeth's sea of blood and the spot on the upper side of my middle finger seems as indelible and as worthy of execration as the stains of Duncan's gore. But I am never insensible to your kindness and always happy to hear of you from you and about you. Besides when you have time to read over the Lady of the Lake notes inclosed you will see how much I have been obliged to your Gaelic erudition so that if I willfully neglected or undervalued your correspondence there would not only be unkindness in it but infinite folly. I shall have a copy of the aforesaid Lady for you I hope very shortly of a size fit for the chaise pocket.

Shall I say I am sorry you have met some little disappointments among your fashionable friends? ² I think

¹ James Johnson (d. 1811), Scottish engraver and music-seller. His *Scots Musical Museum* appeared 1787-1803 in 6 vols., 8vo. It is computed that 184 pieces were contributed by Burns.

² "19th May 1810. An answer to a letter alluding to my vexations at that time experienced from an old lady—received while in the tumult of a

I cannot because you know the use which may be made of experience even when bought at the expence of high-raised expectation or of injured feeling. Yet you have such an excellent and affectionate adviser in Mrs. Clephane that I hope you will have no more of that knowledge of mankind (aye or womankind either) which is bought with pain to yourself. The modern fashionables are a bad race. Selfish feeling and self-indulgence is uppermost in their minds—assist them in their parties—give them the eclat of talent and the superiority derived from the exercise of any accomplishment and you shall be the little deity of the hour ; but never look for your worshippers the next morning—they are chasing some new butterfly with equal ardour and equal sincerity. After all one must submit to all this—it is the order of things and I dare say has been so since courts and cities first arose.

On debruit, on enleve, on s'intrigue, on projette, I have often thought it very fortunate that I was not thrown among these gay folks even for the occasional space of a visit to London until I was of an age not to be much biassed by the opinions of the day nor greatly elated by the temporary attentions which I have sometimes received from those whom somebody terms " Those dangerous persons called our betters."

Yet I have known many whose hearts have retained their natural and noble feeling under the highest varnish of polishd manners. Enough of morality and of that melancholy, most melancholy of sciences calld the knowledge of the world.

first season's gaiety 29 Hertford Street London."—Note by Miss Clephane. She had expatiated on this in her letter of the 15th : " I fear you will think me bitter, but I do assure you, not without reason . . . I have a *friend* who has done me more mischief than half a dozen enemies could have done. . . . If there is an abominable conduct under the sun, it is that which endeavours to guide a young person contrary to their duty & wishes, by well worded sophistry. . . . Mr. Scott is not one of those changeable fashionables whose opinions, like their dress, suffer a total alteration every six months."—*Walpole Collection*.

I am very glad you like the little selection of poetry—it contains much that I don't precisely admire but such a collection should be miscellaneous and have something for every taste.

I have been strongly tempted to go to the Hebrides this season but I think I shall decline it chiefly because I shall not find you at Mull or the Seaforth family at Castle Brahan.¹ Yet this is uncertain for Staffa² tempts me with the offer of a stout sloop and right men to carry me to the out isles, which he has provided for the more profitable purpose of transporting kelp. I understand however his sister Flora is in a very dangerous way which will perhaps make him stay in England longer than he expected and so I think my jaunt to the Hebrides is like to blow up.

I hope when you return to Scotland you will take our farm of Ashestiel in your way where I will be particularly happy to show you all the wonders of our land which if you except Melrose Abbey are very few. Our country is pastoral but not romantic—our house is a good large farm house capable of accommodating our friends but too small to admit mere visitors. Mrs. Scott joins anxiously in this request and in kind Compliments to Mrs. and Miss Clephane. As a penance for doubting the pleasure I would have in hearing from you I wish you would write me your opinion of the *Lady of the Lake*—The notes were printed when I was out of town so they have mangled some Gaelic words—Ever your faithful and respectful

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 19 May 1810

[*Northampton*]

¹ A mansion in Urray parish, Ross-shire, four miles S.S.W. of Dingwall. Built in the seventeenth century by the first Earl of Seaforth, it was here in August 1725 General Wade received the submission of the Mackenzies.

² Ranald Macdonald, Laird of Staffa, and brother of Scott's friend and colleague in the Court of Session, Hector Macdonald Buchanan of Drummalkiln, proprietor of Ross Priory on the shores of Loch Lomond.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, *May 20, 1810*

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I am very sensible of the value of your kind approbation of my efforts,¹ and trust I shall, under such good auspices, keep my ground with the public. I have studied their taste as much as a thing so variable can be calculated upon, and I hope I have again given them an acceptable subject of entertainment. What you say of the songs is very just, and also of the measure. But, on the one hand, I wish to make a difference between my former poems and this new attempt, in the general tenor of versification, and on the other, having an eye to the benefits derivable from the change of stanza, I omitted no opportunity which could be given or taken, of converting my dog-trot into a hop-step-and-jump. I am impatient to see *Kehama*; James Ballantyne, who has a good deal of tact, speaks very highly of the poetical fire and beauty which pervades it; and, considering the success of Sir William Jones, I should think the Hindhu mythology would not revolt the common readers, for in that lies your only danger. As for *Don Pelayo*, it should be exquisite under your management: the subject is noble, the parties finely contrasted in manners, dress, religion, and all that the poet desires to bring into action; and your complete knowledge of every historian who has touched upon the

¹ Southey had written on the 11th of May: "Yesterday evening on my return from the race-ground I found your Poem lying on the table. . . . I did not go to rest till I had finished the book. . . . If I may judge from my own feelings the Lady will be a greater favourite than either of her elder brethren. . . . I wished most of the songs away on the first perusal,—on recurring to them I was glad they were there; yet wherever they interrupt the narrative, without in any way tending to carry on the business of the story, my admiration of the things themselves does not prevent me from thinking them misplaced. . . . The metre of the Lady is to me less agreeable than the more varied measure. . . . Longman was instructed to send you my *Brazil*. . . . What you will think of *Kehama* I am not quite sure. . . . No subject could have been devised more remote from human sympathies."—*Walpole Collection*.

period, promises the reader at once delight and instruction.

Twenty times twenty thanks for the History of Brazil, which has been my amusement, and solace, and spring of instruction for this month past. I have always made it my reading-book after dinner, between the removal of the cloth and our early tea-time. There is only one defect I can point out, and that applies to the publishers—I mean the want of a good map. For, to tell you the truth, with my imperfect atlas of South America, I can hardly trace these same *Tups* of yours (which in our Border dialect signifies *rams*), with all their divisions and subdivisions, through so many ramifications, without a *carte de pays*. The history itself is most singularly entertaining, and throws new light upon a subject which we have hitherto understood very imperfectly. Your labour must have been immense, to judge from the number of curious facts quoted, and unheard-of authorities which you have collected. I have traced the achievements of the Portuguese adventurers with greater interest than I remember to have felt since, when a school-boy, I first perused the duodecimo collection of Voyages and Discoveries called the World Displayed¹—a sensation which I thought had been long dead within me ; for, to say the truth, the philanthropic and cautious conduct of modern discoverers, though far more amiable, is less entertaining than that of the old Buccaneers, and Spaniards, and Portuguese, who went to conquer and achieve adventures, and met with strange chances of fate in consequence, which could never have befallen a well-armed boat's crew, not trusting themselves beyond their watering-place, or trading with the natives on the principles of mercantile good faith.

¹ The librarian of the Royal Geographical Society (London) tells me that the work referred to is : *The World Displayed, or a curious collection of voyages and travels, selected from writers of all nations*. London, 1759, &c., 20 volumes with plates, published by Newbery. A very characteristic introduction was written by Dr. Johnson : third edition, 1767.

I have some thoughts of a journey and voyage to the Hebrides this year, but if I don't make that out, I think I shall make a foray into your northern counties, go to see my friend Morritt at Greta Bridge, and certainly cast myself Keswick-ways either going or coming. I have some literary projects to talk over with you, for the re-editing some of our ancient classical romances and poetry, and so forth. I have great command of our friends the Ballantynes, and I think, so far as the filthy lucre of gain is concerned, I could make a very advantageous bargain for the time which must necessarily be bestowed in such a labour, besides doing an agreeable thing for ourselves, and a useful service to literature. What is become of Coleridge's *Friend*?¹ I hope he had a letter from me, enclosing my trifling subscription. How does *our* friend, Wordsworth? I won't write to him, because he hates letter-writing as much as I do; but I often think on him, and always with affection. If you make any stay at Durham let me know, as I wish you to know my friend Surtees of Mainsforth. He is an excellent antiquary, some of the rust of which study has clung to his manners; but he is good-hearted, and you would make the *summer eve* (for so by the courtesy of the kalendar we must call these abominable easterly blighting afternoons) short between you. I presume you are with my friend Dr Southey,² who, I hope, has not quite forgotten me, in which faith I beg kind compliments to him, and am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Lockhart*]

¹ The paper Coleridge printed at Penrith, which continued from August 1809 to March 1810. The heavy matter of its contents wearied subscribers. He had over six hundred subscribers at the beginning, but by January 1810 two-thirds of them had dropped off.

² Henry Herbert Southey (1783-1865), the poet's younger brother. Scott may have made his acquaintance in 1803 when he was studying at Edinburgh University along with Sir William Knighton and Dr. Robert Gooch. He eventually became a Fellow of the Royal Society and physician to George IV. and to Queen Adelaide.

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

[P.M. 23 May 1810]

MY DEAR MORRITT,—I need not say how acceptable your approbation of the *Lady of the Lake* is to me because you will readily give me credit for feeling both as a friend and as a poet upon the occasion.

Your criticism is quite just as to the Son of the dry Bone, Brian. Truth is I had intended the battle should have been more detaild and that some of the persons mentiond in the third canto and Brian in particular should have been commemorated. I intended he should have been shot like a *corbie on a craig* as he was excommunicating and anathematizing the Saxons from some of the predominant peaks in the Trosachs. But I found the battle in itself too much misplaced to admit of being prolonged by any Details which could be spared. For it was in the first place *episodical* and then all the principal characters had been disposed of before it came on and were absent at the time of action and nothing hinged upon the issue of consequence to the fable. So I e'en left it to the judgement of my readers whether Brian was worried in the Trosachs or escaped to take earth in his old retreat in Benharrow near Ardkinlas.

My principal reason of writing immediatly is to beg you will have the goodness to address your pamphlet to me under cover to Mr. Freling General Post Office who gives me the privilege of his unlimited frank in favour of literature. Any moderate packet will always reach me in that way. The Ballantynes I am sure will be desirous to have some.—I have a little commission for you if you will be kind enough to accept of it. You know I fell in love with your Library table and now that the *Lady* has put crowns into my purse I would willingly treat myself unto the like—only I think I have not much occasion for the space which holds accompt books in other respect[s] it is quite a model : and in that respect I

don't quarrell with it ; for why should I not be a rich man one day and have accompt Books. Now were I to send to your Upholsterer (not to mention I have forgot his local habitation and his name) he would probably send me what he best pleased and therefore I intrude so far on your time as to request you when you are taking a walk to order me such a table as yours ; the terms to be ready money on the things arriving here. I should like it to come before I leave town for Ashestiel which will be 12 July.

I sometimes have thought of a jaunt to the Hebrides this summer. But if this highland trip should misgive I would not have you be too secure from an invasion at Rokeby for I have been persuading myself that the Carlisle stage would set me down at Greta Bridge in no time at all and I sleep most delectably in a mail-coach. But all this is at present as much a dream [as] honest John Bunyans Pilgrim's [Progress].

So your London citizens are taking the alarm. As Dryden says ¹

I would it should be so—'tis a good horror
First let them fear for rapes and plunderd houses
Cold Burghers must be struck and struck like flints
Ere their hid fire will sparkle—

It is disgraceful to see the legislature of this mighty Kingdom representatives of all the power wisdom and property of Great Britain insulted by the very scum of the earth for such must the mob of Westminster [be] and very little better do I hold the factious demagogues of the Livery.

I am vexd about Lady Hood & wish her here with all my heart & soul. I have not interested myself in anybodys happiness so much this long while & I feel very jealous for her unprotected state.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind Compliments to Mrs. Morritt. I fear she will be now longing excessively for the groves of Rokeby. Ever yours
W. SCOTT

¹ *The Duke of Guise*, Act IV, Scene 3, with some variations.

Pray dont be lazy [but] finish your ballad¹ with a wannion² to you. Ellis is at Sunninghill—well I hope & active in the good cause. I have not heard from him lately through my own fault. Pray rummage out your copy of the Minstrelsy from Longman & Co/. It has been with them ages ago.

Our parliamentary affair was settled by Composition.

[Law]

TO THOMAS SCOTT, ESQ., DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

[Extract]

EDINBURGH, 25th May 1810

MY DEAR TOM,—I write under some anxiety for your interest, though I sincerely hope it is groundless. The devil or James Gibson has put it into Lord Lauderdale's head to challenge your annuity³ in the House of Lords on account of Your non-residence and your holding a com-mision in the militia. His lordship kept his intention as secret as possible but unfortunately it reached the kind and friendly ear of Colin Mackenzie. Lord Melville takes the matter up stoutly, and I have little doubt will carry his point unless the whole bill is given up for the season, which some concurring opposition from different quarters renders not impossible. In that case you must, at the expense of a little cash and time, show face in Edinburgh for a week or two and attend your office.

¹ See note, p. 224.

² "Wanion" (*obs.* or *Scot.*), generally used in phrases. "With a wanion" means bad luck to you.

³ When Scott was trying to help his brother before he had to betake himself to the Isle of Man he had appointed him to a subordinate office in his disposal yielding about £200 a year, its duties being entirely mechanical. This post the Commission of Judicature, of which Scott was secretary, proposed to abolish, but granting compensation, which in this case would be about £130 a year. To this exception was taken, as Scott describes. For the whole affair see Lockhart. The matter has been variously judged and was doubtless the kind of thing which could and did happen under the old system of aristocratic patronage and does now happen under the system of out-of-work insurance.

But I devoutly hope all will be settled by the bill being passed as it now stands. This is truly a most unworthy exertion of private spite and malice, but I trust it will be in vain.

[Lockhart]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[May-June 1810]

MY DEAR ELLIS,—I have been scandalously lazy in answering your kind epistle, received I don't know how long since ; but then I had been long your creditor, and I fancy correspondents, like merchants, are often glad to plead their friends' neglect of their accompt-current as an apology for their own, especially when they know that the value of the payments being adjusted, must leave a sad balance against them. I have run up an attempt on the Curse of Kehama for the Quarterly ; a strange thing it is—the Curse, I mean—and the critique is not, as the blackguards say, worth a damn ; but what I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. It is infinite pity of Southey, with genius almost to exuberance, so much learning and real good feeling of poetry, that, with the true obstinacy of a foolish papa, he *will* be most attached to the defects of his poetical offspring. This said Kehama affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the Edinburgh Review. I could have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*.

I told you how much I was delighted with your critique on the Lady¹ ; but, very likely moved by the same feeling for which I have just censured Southey, I am still inclined to defend the eight-syllable stanza, which I have somehow persuaded myself is more congenial to

¹ In the *Quarterly Review*, May 1810.

the English language—more favourable to narrative poetry at least—than that which has been commonly termed heroic verse. If you will take the trouble to read a page of Pope's *Iliad*, you will probably find a good many lines out of which two syllables may be struck without injury to the sense. The first lines of this translation have been repeatedly noticed as capable of being cut down from ships of the line into frigates, by striking out the said two-syllabled words, as—

“ Achilles' wrath to Greece, the *direful* spring
Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess, sing,
That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign
The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,
Whose bones unburied on the *desert* shore,
Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.”

Now, since it is true that by throwing out the epithets underscored, we preserve the sense without diminishing the force of the verses—and since it is also true that scarcely one of the epithets are more than merely expletive—I do really think that the structure of verse which requires least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible and animated. The case is different in descriptive poetry, because there epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided, and admit of being varied *ad infinitum*. But if in narrative you are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced upon those that are merely common-places, such as “*heavenly* goddess,” “*desert* shore,” and so forth ; and I need not tell you, that whenever any syllable is obviously inserted for the completion of a couplet, the reader is disposed to quarrel with it. Besides, the eight-syllable stanza is capable of certain varieties denied to the heroic. Double rhymes, for instance, are congenial to it, which often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences ; you may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly, and which I

think its principal merit, it runs better into sentences than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with the proper and usual space between comma and comma. Lastly the Second,—and which ought perhaps to have been said first,—I think I have somehow a better knack at this “false gallop” of verse, as Touchstone calls it, than at your more legitimate hexameters ; and so there is the short and long of my longs and shorts. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Lockhart*]

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN¹

5 June [1810]

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am proud that the Lady of the Lake can divert an hours pain or lassitude though very sorry Lord Egremont² should need her assistance for that purpose. The line he mentions must be a very indifferent one for I have had repeated application for a commentary.³ The best I can give is that I thought the Fox Glove a stiff glaring sort of a flower no bad emblem of *pride*. As to the Nightshade you know its deleterious qualities & it ran in my confused head that the ancients used its juice in poisoning state criminals. Bruised hemlock was

¹ The “daughter of Count Brühl of Martkirchen, long Saxon ambassador at the Court of St. James’s, by his wife Almeria, Countess-Dowager of Egremont. The young kinsman [Walter Scott] was introduced to her soon after her arrival at Mertoun, and his attachment to German studies excited her attention and interest.”—LOCKHART.

² Sir George O’Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont (1751-1837), the patron of Turner, Haydon, Flaxman, Nollekens, Constable. “Lord Egremont is dead ; a great loss, especially to artists. He was an extraordinary man—manly, straightforward, tender-hearted, a noble patron, an attached friend and an affectionate and indulgent parent. His great pleasure was in sharing with the highest and humblest the advantages and luxuries of his vast income. The very animals at Petworth seemed happier than in any other spot on earth . . . at his table as at Sir George Beaumont’s, Lord Mulgrave’s or Sir Robert Peel’s painter, sculptor, poet and minister and soldier all were as equals.”—HAYDON.

³ See letter, vol. iii. pp. 180-81, and note.

however employd for that purpose in the affair of Socrates nor am I prepared to affirm that my own recollection will prove more accurate in any other though I have never enquired. In transmitting this account of my meaning to Lord Egremont be so good as to take notice that I give it under the reservation of my privilege to adopt any more ingenious meaning which my critics may find out for me.

I am returning to Edinr. au plus vite & I fear I shall find difficulty from the state of official duty to be out upon 5th June. But we will meet and be merry in summer. Believe me dear Madam truly & respectfully Yours

MELROSE *Wednesday*

WALTER SCOTT

I have a nice little foal at Ashestiel for the little cousins.
[*Polwarth*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[EDINBURGH *June 10, 1810*]¹

MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE,—I am truly gratified by your kind approbation of the *Lady of the Lake* for were I to be asked who in Great Britain I should most wish to please by my poetical attempts I would certainly name the person whose works had afforded me the highest degree of interest and pleasure and in this respect I know not any one who comes within a bow shot of you. As I am quite sensible of the necessity of giving the public some variety of manner as well as of story I stretched my canvas on a much smaller scale than when I attempted the story of *Flodden*. Should I ever write again which is very uncertain I intend to take the Hebridean character and scenery with that of the North of Ireland for my subject—but this is truly speaking of the saddling of a foal.

¹ Joanna Baillie marked the original “1811.” A later hand has marked it “1810.” Scott’s date (with no year) is at the end.

I have forwarded your letter to Grahame and have done all the little in my power to assist him in his object. The only good I can do is to endeavour to remove political prejudices founded on his poem of Copenhagen,¹ and being myself "more an ancient Roman than a Dane" I have, I think, some chance of being listened to upon such a subject. What probability of success he has is at present uncertain. The vestry in whom the Election lies are like other solemn bodies mysterious and oracular and the individuals who compose that august Sanhedrim when spoke to separately cry "hum" "go to" look wise and make the most of their temporary importance. But we will keep a sharp look out and do the best we can for the Sabbath Bard who is really a most worthy and amiable man and an excellent painter of Scottish manners and scenery.

The adventure of the Duke of Cumberland is indeed terrible. It looks as if all the curses of the poor Highlanders upon the head of his predecessor in title had been suspended in effect and had now fallen upon the inoffensive wearer of his unlucky coronet. Is it not very odd that old Duke William, after all the "Tears of Scotland,"² should have died quietly in his bed and that this man who is one of the most orderly of his family (I believe) should be hacked to pieces by an Italian Valet for no reason at all. By the way I have used the incident in conversation as a confutation to those who deny that the excess of hatred in De Montfort's character is founded in nature. Seilis [*sic*] appears though in low life to have been a remarkable person and I dare say was quite right in his quarrels with Neale but finding his complaints neglected and that none of the friends to whom he mentioned them sympathized with his feelings he brooded over them till he became capable of this desperate

¹ *The Siege of Copenhagen : a poem.* 4to. London, 1808.

² Smollett's poem, inspired by the cruelty of the Duke of Cumberland after Culloden.

action.¹ A passion which we dare not impart to others or which when imparted attracts no sympathy is sure in minds of a certain cast to burn with a flame more ardent because smotherd. But to talk to you of passions is really sending as we say *saut* to Dysart.

I have heard nothing from the gentleman whom you mention as the person you wish to draw the price of the Family Legend. The money is ready—had I not better send you the Bill and you can transfer it to him in your own way. The Booksellers credit is I suppose nearly expired—I mean the time of payment is at hand. By the way the said family Legend was acted the other day to an overflowing house. Many people brought the book in their pocket and it seemd even to gain on the public from the acquaintance they had formd with it in the clóset.

Charlotte sends you ten thousand kind thanks for your rect. We have not had occasion to use it because this vile cough which still hangs about our young people will declare itself to be the hooping cough.² The two eldest left Edinr. to day to go to Ashestiel with their mother for a few days in hopes the change of air may relieve them of this obstinate cold. They were otherwise quite recoverd of their indisposition and regaining strength and good looks apace. Charlotte would have written to tell

¹ "On the night of 31 May 1810 the duke was found in his apartments in St. James's Palace with a terrible wound on his head, which would have been mortal had not the assassin's weapon struck against the duke's sword. Shortly afterwards his valet, Sellis, was found dead in his bed with his throat cut. . . . The coroner's jury returned a verdict that Sellis had committed suicide after attempting to assassinate the duke. . . . Democratic journals did not hesitate to accuse the duke of horrible crimes, and even to hint that he really murdered Sellis." It was to this Joanna Baillie had referred in her letter of the 5th: "I suppose you are now busy discussing this horrible story of the Duke of Cumberland: we are still engaged with it, tho' it is almost a week since it happen'd . . . and now one may safely call on the dullest person within the liberties of Westminster without danger of lacking conversation."

² Joanna Baillie had suggested a remedy to Mrs. Scott on 16th March: "It is Roach's Embrocation for the hooping-cough."

you all this but she feels or rather thinks she feels difficulty in expressing herself on paper so accurately as she would. She sometimes takes fits of apprehension of this kind though she understands English like a native.

I enclose for Mrs. Hunter a copy of the little metrical Miscellany which has long lain at the bottom of my portmanteau when packd for London. I assure you I value her applause not a little for my sense of it is proportioned to my estimation of her acknowledged talents. I fancy Dr. Baillie and you Northern folks banished to the lands where

Meadows flower and cornfield [*sic*] wave in the sun,
like my poetical bouquet the better that it is chiefly
composed of highland heather.

My kindest Compliments attend Miss Baillie the Dr. and his Lady in which my wife does not join expressly because she is thirty miles off and I am a bachelor and obliged to my bookseller if he will dine with me. But I think I can answer for her kindest wishes so I send them upon trust. Ever your truly obliged & affectionate
W. SCOTT

EDINR. 10 June [1810]

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[Extract]

EDINBURGH, June 12th [1810]

DEAR TOM,—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I have every reason to believe that the bill will pass this week. It has been *committed* ; upon which occasion Lord Lauderdale stated various objections, all of which were repelled. He then adverted to your case with some sufficiently bitter observations. Lord Melville advised him to reserve his epithets till he was pleased to state

his cause, as he would pledge himself to show that they were totally inapplicable to the transaction. The Duke of Montrose also intimated his intention to defend it, which I take very kind of his Grace, as he went down on purpose, and declared his resolution to attend whenever the business should be stirred. So much for

“The Lord of Graham, by every chief adored,
Who boasts his native philabeg restored.”¹

[*Lockhart*]

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[Extract]

EDINBURGH, 21st June 1810

MY DEAR TOM,—The bill was read a third time in the House of Lords, on which occasion Lord Lauderdale made his attack, which Lord Melville answered. There was not much said on either side: Lord Holland supported Lord Lauderdale, and the bill passed without a division.² So you have fairly doubled Cape Lauderdale. I believe his principal view was to insult my feelings, in which he has been very unsuccessful, for I thank God I feel nothing but the most hearty contempt both for the attack and the sort of paltry malice by which alone it could be dictated.

[*Lockhart*]

¹ These lines are a slight variation from the *Rolliad*.

² “THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE moved an amendment. . . . The application of this amendment was towards the compensation intended for Mr Thomas Scott, the brother of Walter Scott. It appeared the former was appointed to the office of an Extractor at a time when it must have been foreseen that those offices would be abolished. . . . By the present bill Mr T. Scott would have £130 for life as an indemnity for an office, the duties of which he never had performed, while those clerks who had laboured for twenty years had no adequate remuneration. . . . LORD HOLLAND thought . . . Mr Thomas Scott was placed in a situation which he and his brother knew at the time would be abolished; and from Parliament he claimed an indemnity for what could not be pronounced any loss. It was unjust as regarded others, and improper as it respected Parliament.” “The amendment was then proposed and negatived. The bill was accordingly read the third time and passed.”—HANSARD, June 1810.

TO LADY ABERCORN

29th June 1810

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I was agreeably disappointed by your kind letter in which you take upon you a fault which was really mine for I ought to have apprized you that the Lady of the Lake was waiting to pay her respects to your Ladyship and the Marquis as you passed through Dumfries. I am truly glad the Marquis thinks it worth his patronage as I certainly most sincerely wished it might not disgrace his Lordship's acknowledged taste and the kind and friendly dispositions with proofs of which he has honoured me upon so very many occasions. I like it myself as well as any of my former attempts, and the public seem to receive it with kindness which even the sanguine hopes of the Booksellers had not anticipated. The quarto edit. of 2000 has not lasted a fortnight and the smaller edition [is] now published of which I hope to send your Ladyship a copy to-morrow or next day as it contains a few corrections made since the 1st edition. As for my lover I find with deep regret that however interesting lovers are to each other it is no easy matter to render them generally interesting. There was however another reason for keeping Malcolm Graeme's character a little *under* as the painters say for it must otherwise have interfered with that of the King which I was more anxious to bring forward in splendour or something like it.

As the Session of our Courts will soon be over I intend to go for a fortnight to the Hebrides which I have never visited though I have been on the opposite mainland. I hardly know whether to expect much or not but I strongly suspect the best parts of Highland scenery are those which lie upon the main—But my friend Ronald Macdonald of Staffa promises me a good barge six rowers a piper and his own company for pilot which is a strong temptation. Had your Ladyship remained in Ireland and been adventurously disposed you might have sailed from the Irish

coast and in five hours or not much more visited the famous cavern of Fingal. I will let you know on my return whether it be worth seeing or no.

I am truly happy Lord Hamilton's health is likely to be re-established and that his lady meets your maternal hopes. I hear high accounts of her from every quarter and I am sure he deserves domestic happiness which her temper and dispositions are I understand likely to secure to him.

I am grieved about Lady Castlereagh's letters which would have been of great consequence to me but I hope her Ladyship will publish them according to her present intention and I will be happy to have an opportunity of seeing them.

We expect Lord Melville here immediately and I think I may have some chance of finding him at Dunira on my return from the West Highlands. We have had a great change in my official situation our perquisites being exchanged for salaries of £1100,, with a chance of getting a hundred or two more by application to Exchequer—no bad prospect when the decease of my senior shall put me in possession.

I suppose Sir Francis Burdett's extravagancies have been of considerable service to ministers as they must have the necessary effect of compelling everybody to rally about the King and the Government. Pray what is supposed to be the real motive of Sir Francis's rejecting the civic triumph which his friends had so kindly prepared for him. Was he afraid that his guards and escort might not prove so orderly as to do credit to their general or did he feel reluctance, like Sir John Falstaff to "march through Coventry" at the head of his ragged regiment?

Adieu my dear friend—if I am not drowned in the whirlpool of Corrievrekin or knocked against the basaltic columns of Staffa or carried off by some of the spectre Abbots of Iona or eaten up by the wild Macraus whose appearance struck Johnson with some apprehensions of

the kind your Ladyship shall hear from me with some accounts of my wanderings. I beg to be respectfully remembered to the Marquis (by whose kind letter I was much gratified) to Lord Hamilton and the Ladies and ever am your Ladyship's very faithful and respectful humble servant,

W. SCOTT

Excuse a wafer as I write from the Court where we are allowed no lighted tapers.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[Extract]

[*July 1810*]

LORD HOLLAND has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party.¹ He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and *cut* him with as little remorse as an old pen.

[*Lockhart*]

TO JOHN RICHARDSON²

EDINBURGH, 3d *July* 1810

MY DEAR RICHARDSON,—I ought before now to have written you my particular thanks for your kind attention to the interest which I came so strangely and unexpectedly

¹ At a dinner of the *Friday Club*, at Fortune's Tavern, to which Lord Holland was introduced by Mr. Thomas Thomson. "Two gentlemen, who were present, inform me that they distinctly remember a very painful scene. . . . One of them (Lord Jeffrey) adds, that this was the only example of rudeness he ever witnessed in him [Scott] in the course of a lifelong familiarity. I have thought it due to truth and justice not to omit this disagreeable passage in Scott's life, which shows how even his mind could at times be unhinged and perverted by the malign influence of political spleen. . . . He enjoyed much agreeable intercourse in after days with Lord Holland, and retained no feelings of resentment towards any of the Whig gentlemen named in the preceding correspondence."—LOCKHART. The Club was instituted in June 1803 and continued down to the period of Scott's death.

² For John Richardson, parliamentary solicitor and man of literary tastes, see later correspondence with himself and with Joanna Baillie.

to have in the passing of the Judicature Bill. The only purpose which I suppose Lord Lauderdale had in view was to state charges which could neither be understood nor refuted, and to give me a little pain by dragging my brother's misfortunes into public notice. If the last was his aim, I am happy to say it has most absolutely miscarried, for I have too much contempt for the motive which dictated his Lordship's eloquence, to feel much for its thunders. My brother loses by the bill from £150 to £200, which no power short of an act of Parliament could have taken from him ; and far from having a view to the compensation, he is a considerable loser by its being substituted for the actual receipts of his office. I assure you I am very sensible of your kind and friendly activity and zeal in my brother's behalf.

I received the Guerras¹ safe ; it is a fine copy, and I think very cheap, considering how difficult it is now to procure foreign books. I shall be delighted to have the *Traité des Tournois*.² I propose, on the 12th, setting forth for the West Highlands, with the desperate purpose of investigating the caves of Staffa, Egg, and Skye. There was a time when this was a heroic undertaking, and when the return of Samuel Johnson from achieving it was hailed by the Edinburgh literati with "per varios casus," and other scraps of classical gratulation equally new and elegant. But the harvest of glory has been entirely reaped by the early discoverers ; and in an age when every London citizen makes Loch Lomond his washpot, and throws his shoe over Ben-Nevis, a man may endure every hardship, and expose himself to every danger of the Highland seas, from sea-sickness to the jaws of the great sea-snake, without gaining a single leaf of laurel for his pains.

¹ *Historia de las Guerras Civiles de Granada*. By G. Perez de Hita. With MS. note by Sir W. S. 8vo. Amherst, 1714. Abbotsford Library Catalogue, p. 49.

² Cl. Franc. Menestrier's *Traité des Tournois, Joustes, Carrouels, et autres Spectacles publics*. 4to. Lyon, 1669. Abbotsford Library Catalogue, p. 101.

The best apology for bestowing all this tediousness upon you is, that John Burnet is dinning into the ears of the Court a botheration about the politics of the magnificent city of Culross. But I will release you sooner than I fear I shall escape myself, with the assurance that I am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Lockhart*]

To JOANNA BAILLIE

ULVA HOUSE,¹ July 19, 1810

I CANNOT, my dear Miss Baillie resist the temptation of writing to you from scenes which you have rendered classical as well as immortal. We—which in the present case means my wife, my eldest girl, and myself—are thus far in fortunate accomplishment of a pilgrimage to the Hebrides. The day before yesterday we passed the Lady's Rock in the Sound of Mull so near that I could have almost touched it. This is, you know, *the rock* of your Family Legend. The boat by my desire went as near as prudence permitted and I wished to have picked a relique from it were it but a cockle shell or a muscel to have sent to you but a spring-tide was running with such force and velocity as to make the thing impossible. About two miles farther we passed under the Castle of Duart the seat of Maclean consisting of one huge (indeed immense) square tower in ruins, and additional turrets and castellated buildings (the work, doubtless, of Benlora's guardianship), on which the roof still moulders. It overhands [*sic*] the strait channel from a lofty rock without a single tree in the vicinity and is surrounded by high and barren mountains forming altogether as wild and dreary a scene as I ever beheld. Duart is confronted by the opposite castles of Dunstaffnage,

¹ The Hebridean residence of Mr. Macdonald, the young laird of Staffa, on the island of Ulva on the west coast of Mull, lying between Loch Tuadh and the entrance of Loch-na-Keal, and separated on the west from Gometra by a narrow strait.

Dunally Ardtornish Elair Stalker and others all once the abodes of grim feudal chiefs who warred incessantly with each other. I think I counted seven of these fortresses in sight at once and heard seven times seven legends of war and wonder connected with them. We landed late wet and cold on the Island of Mull near another old castle called Aros,—separated, too, from our cloaths which were in a large wherry which could not keep pace with our row-boat. Mr. Macdonald of Staffa my kind friend and guide had sent his piper (a constant attendant—mark that !) to rouse a highland gentleman's family in the neighbourhood where we were received with a profusion of kindness and hospitality. Why should I appal you with a description of our difficulties and distresses—how Charlotte lost her shoes and little Sophia her whole collection of pebbles—how I was divorced from my razors, and our whole party looked like a Jewish Sanhedrim ! By this time we were accumulated as follows—Sir George Paul¹ the great philanthropist—Mrs. Apreece a distant relation of mine and Hannah Mackenzie, a daughter of our friend Henry,² Mackinnon of Mackinnon a young gentleman born and bred in England but nevertheless a Highland chief.³ It seems his father had acquired wealth and this young man who now visits the Highlands for the first time is anxious to buy back some of the family property which was sold long since. Some twenty McKinnons who happened to live within hearing of our arrival (that is, I suppose, within ten miles of Aros) came posting to see their young chief, who behaved with great kindness and propriety and liberality. Next day we rode across the isle on highland ponies attended by a numerous retinue of Gillies and arrived at the head of the salt-water loch called *Loch-an-Gaoil* where Staffa's boats awaited us

¹ Sir George Onesiphorus Paul (1746-1820), philanthropist, prison reformer in Gloucestershire.

² I have inserted a comma to avoid confusion of the names.

³ William Alexander Mackinnon, Esq., later M.P. for Lymington, Hants.

with colours flying and pipes playing. We proceeded in state to this lonely isle where our honourd Landlord has a very comfortable residence and were received by a discharge of swivels and musquetry from his people. Yesterday we visited Staffa and Iona. The former is one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded in my mind every description I had heard of it or rather, the appearance of the cavern composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty and in one place with a little danger as far as the furthest extremity. Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatmen I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stop'd some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern *Clachan-an-Bairdh* or the poet's stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch which the echoes rendered tremendous and a glass of whisky not pourd forth in the ancient mode of libation but turned over the throats of the Assistants. The Head boatman whose father had been himself a bard made me a speech on the occasion but as it was in Gaelic I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment—bow and say nothing. When this fun was over (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious) we went to Iona where there are some ancient and curious monuments. From this rude and remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins are of a rude architecture but curious to the Antiquary. Our return hither was less comfortable ; we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind besides the

pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to windward. The ladies were sick especially poor Hannah McKenzie and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men however cheered by the pipes and by their own interesting boat-songs which are uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue and we reached Ulva at ten at night tolerably wet and well disposed for bed.

Our friend Staffa is himself an excellent specimen of Highland chieftainship ; he is a cadet of Clan Ranald, and Lord of a cluster of isles on the western side of Mull and a large estate (in extent at least) on that island. By dint of minute attention to this property and particularly to the management of his kelp-shores [he] has at once trebled his income and doubled his population while emigration is going on all around him. But he is very attentive to his people who are distractedly fond of him and has them under such regulations as conduce both to his own benefit and their profit and keeps a certain sort of rude state and hospitality in which they can take much pride. I am quite satisfied that nothing under the personal attention of the landlord himself will satisfy a highland tenantry and that the substitution of factors which is now becoming general is one great cause of emigration. This mode of life has, however, its evils and I can see them in this excellent and enthusiastic young man. The habit of solitary power is dangerous even to the best regulated minds and this ardent and enthusiastic young man has not escaped the prejudices incident to his situation. He beards the Duke of Argyle the Lord Lieutenant and hates with a perfect hatred the wicked Macleans on the other side of Mull who fought with his ancestors two hundred years ago.

But I think I have bestowed enough of my tediousness upon you and so to ballast my letter I put in one of

the hallowd green pebbles from the shore of St Columbus (*sic*)—put it into your work-basket until we meet, when you will give me some account of its virtues. Don't suppose the lapidaries can give you any information about it for in their profane eyes it is good for nothing.

But the piper is sounding to breakfast so no more (excepting love to Miss Agnes, Dr. and Mrs. Baillie) from your truly affectionate

WALTER SCOTT

P.S.—I am told by the learned the pebble will wear its way out of the letter so I will keep it till I get to Edinburgh.

I must not omit to mention, that all through these islands I have found every person familiarly acquainted with the Family Legend, and great admirers.¹

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[P.M. *July 29, 1810*]

MY DEAR ELLIS,—I am just returning from a most delightful Highland tour in which we have scarcely encountered a single shower of rain. The night before we set forth the Lady Juliana Berners arrived in custody of a skillful skipper (or schip-fere) who had taken the

¹ On the 8th August Joanna replied : “ The Hebrides and I suppose also the North of Ireland which you have in your thoughts, as you mentioned in your former letters, for the subject of your next poem, seems to be an excellent one, most happily suited to your genius : the scenery, the manners of the people & the characters of their Chiefs will make a new world for our common world here to peep into, full of attractions. . . . Pray lay by my pebble for me ; and bring it to me in your pocket when you come to London. Coming from St. Columbas & Walter Scott, I shant care a jot what the Lapidaries say about it. I thank you for your account of Mull & the Lady's rock, and am proud to hear the Highlanders like my Legend.”—*Walpole Collection*.

greatest care of her during her voyage.¹ She is a great beauty and promises to be the envy of all our forest Lairds. I hope to tell you next year that she has won the silver collar which we contend for annually. If her action answers her appearance of which I have no doubt she will be quite invaluable to me as my present favourites are arrived at that time when the prioress of St. Albans says a greyhound should be

— a stale
Gret biches to assaille.

So ten thousand thanks for having put me in the way of not being outrun upon Cotswould.

The morning after July's arrival we set forth on our pilgrimage, in the course of which I have wishd for you at least a thousand times. My wife and daughter were of the party and equally delighted. The number of English travellers have of late years made the Highland tours tolerable which they were not in my former visits to the mountains—so that we have no tale of hardships or even of privation to tell you. Our voyage down the Sound of Mull was very grand. I counted seven old castles, all the abodes of doughty chiefs of ancient days in sight at the same moment. Our friend and guide was Ranald McDonald the proprietor of Staffa, from which he takes his *petit titre*, and of many a dark isle islet creek and bay, around that celebrated spot. With a very good education he retains much of the Highland manners and enthusiasm, and is almost worshipped by his followers. We landed that night at Aros in the isle of Mull very late, and as we were aug-

¹ "As," wrote Ellis on 30th June, "the long line of noble hounds who, in due time, ought to spring from Juliana the black (hitherto concealed under the humbler name of Fly) might possibly be lost to fame if any untoward accident should befall the said Lady on her journey, I have given directions that she may be . . . packed in a large convenient hamper, which will insure her proper demeanour as an outside passenger on the stage coach . . . as she is of a famous breed, the best judges assure me that she will acquire the graces which are said to be hereditary in her family."—*Walpole Collection*.

mented to a numerous party we were quartered by our leader among the hospitable inhabitants, and on the morning resumed our march on foot and poney back with such a train as might have graced a chieftain of old. None however were around except Staffa's piper who wore broadsword dirk and pistol although I could read in the eyes of some of the Southern who accompanied us that they considered his pipes as the most formidable part of his accoutrements. If you think it worth while to look at the map you will see that Mull is indented by a deep salt water lake running into the land from the westward. There we embarked in two gallant boats which Staffa had waiting for us and proceeded to the isle of Ulva in the mouth of the lake where he has his residence. We entered the sound of Ulva with pipes playing and banners displayed, and were received by Staffas people, who were all under arms, with a discharge of artillery. The next day we were escorted to Staffa and Iona. The cavern well deserves its renown and is in fact one of the few places of which I have heard a great deal that retains its high character after being visited. I penetrated over the broken columns to the very extremity but some of our party took fright. The Hebridean boatmen who are great admirers of poetry and music and still hold the character of the Vates in ancient respect, did me the honor to christen a stone at the mouth of the cavern by the sounding title of *Clachan an Bhaird Sassenach more* or the Stone of the great Saxon poet. One of them made me a long oration on the subject with much gesture and emphasis, but I was obliged to take the contents as he did my poetical talents, upon trust. Only, I learnd he praised me for "burnishing the armour of the mighty dead," and for being the friend of the chieftain Staffa—Iona is a very singular place—the remains of the church though not beautiful are very curious, and nothing can be more wonderful than to see the numbers of sculptured monuments of

priests and warriors in a place so extremely desolate and miserable. The inhabitants are in the last state of poverty and wretchedness. Fisheries might reli[e]ve them but I see no other resource, for the island though fertile, considering all things, does not produce food for the inhabitants, and they have neither money nor commodities to induce importation of provisions. We did not stay so long as I could have wishd, being threatend with a gale of wind—no pleasant prospect in an open boat on the Atlantic. Our hardy boatmen however kept pulling against wind and tide for more than five hours during which time they rowed twenty miles singing all the while to their oars their old ditties of clan-battles and gatherings—But my paper cuts me short—God bless you, and love to Mrs. Ellis in which Charlotte cordially joins. Ever yours

W. SCOTT

THE ROSS ON LOCH LOMOND *Friday*

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

MY DEAR JAMES,—I am very sorry for the state of your health and should be still more so were I not certain that I can prescribe for you as well as any phisician in Edinburgh. You have naturally an athletic constitution and a hearty stomach and these agree very ill with a sedentary life and the habits of indolence which it brings on. Your stomach thus gets weak & from those complaints of all others arise most certainly flatulence hypochondria & all the train of unpleasant feelings connected with indigestion. We all know the horrible sensation of the night-mare arises from the same cause which gives those waking night-mares commonly calld the blue-devils. You must positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating not for a month or two but for a year at least and take regular

exercise and my life for yours. I know this by myself for if I were to eat and drink in town as I do here it would soon finish me, and yet I am sensible I live too genially in Edinburgh as it is.

I am glad to hear you intend to give yourself a little respite which is the wisest thing you can do provided you resist the hospitality of your Kelso cronies. I am desirous to meet Terry at Melrose where I conclude you will make a short halt on thursday. I conclude you will be there about twelve or one o'clock if the day be favourable & I am not otherwise detain'd you will find me at Charles Erskines or about the Abbey. Yours very truly

ASHESTIEL 7 Aug. [1810]

W. SCOTT

[Glen]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, Aug. 9 1810

MY DEAR MRS. CLEPHANE,—We are just returned from Mull delighted with our excursion and with everything but the absence of the family from Torloisk, for the house was smiling so pleasantly in the sun-shine when it was pointed out to us as if [it] knew it was looking upon the friends of its inhabitants—I will not tell a word about Staffa or Iona, or the tombs of all the gallant chief[s] and pious Abbots, who are there interd, nor how Sir George Paul wished himself in the worst of the wards of his own prison at Gloucester. (internally as I guest) rather than in some of the places we visited—nor how all the McKinnons came from various quarters, to worship a young English Scotchman who is their chief and who now visited the country of his ancestors for the first time. All these, with other more astonishing incidents are to remain in store for evening chat, when we have the honor which we anxiously expect, to see the young ladies and you at this sheiling. We are very anxious to know your motions. Our own [are] at length fixed. I must

leave this place for Edinr. on Monday, to take my turn of official duty, which will I fear, detain me till near the end of the week following—We shall return on the 24th at farthest, and shall then be stationary for the season. If in the meantime you should go on to Edinburgh, it must be with the intention of coming out with us again. But I rather suspect the hospitality of the North of England, will detain you for a fortnight and that you will come straight here.

My kind remembrances attend the young ladies, and Mrs. Scott begs hers both to you and them. I have the honour to be Dear Madam, Your most faithful and obt. servant

WALTER SCOTT

Pray direct to Edinr. and let me know your motions.
[Northampton]

To JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT,—Your kind letter reachd me in the very centre of the Isle of Mull from which circumstance you will perceive how vain it was for me even to attempt availing myself of your kind invitation to Rokeby which would otherwise have given us so much pleasure. We deeply regretted the absence of our kind and accomplishd friends the Clephanes yet *entre nous* as we were upon a visit to a family of the Capulets I do not know but we may pay our respects to them more pleasantly at another time. There subsist some aching scars of the old wounds which were in former times inflicted upon each other by the rival tribes of McLean and McDonald and my very good friends the Laird of Staffa and Mrs. McLean Clephane are both too keen highlanders to be without the characteristic prejudices of their clans which in their case divide two highly accomplishd and most estimable families living almost within sight of each other and on an island

where polishd conversation cannot be supposed to abound. I was delighted upon the whole with my excursion. The weather was most excellent during the whole time of our wanderings and I need not tell you of Highland hospitality. The cavern at Staffa and indeed the island itself *dont on parle en histoire* is one of the few *lions* which completely maintain an extended reputation. I do not know whether its extreme resemblance to a work of art from the perfect regularity of the columns or the grandeur of its dimensions far exceeding the works of human industry joind to a certain ruggedness and magnificent irregularity by which Nature vindicates her handywork are most forcibly impressd upon my memory. We also saw the far famed island of Columbus where there are many monuments of singular curiosity forming a strange contrast to the squalid and dejected poverty of the present inhabitants of the isle. We accomplishd both these objects in one day but our return though we had no alarms to boast of was fatiguing to the ladies and the sea not affording us quite such a smooth passage as we had upon the Thames (that morning we heard the voice of Lyson yelling forth the contents of the records in the white tower) did as one may say excite a combustion in the stomachs of some of our party. Mine being a staunch Anti revolutionist was no otherwise troublesome than by demanding frequent supplies of cold beef and biscuit. Mrs. Apreece a fashionable little woman but who travels rather to *say she has seen* than to *see* was of our party—Also

Sir George Paul for prison-house renownd

A wandering knight on high adventures bound.

We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not unlike some of the misadventures of Him of the woeful Figure.¹ The worthy Bart. was mounted on a

¹ It would seem Scott means Don Quixote, "the Knight of the Woeful Countenance." Jarvis in his translation translated "figure" for "countenance."

quadruped which the owners call'd a poney with his woeful valet on another and travelling slowly along the coast of Mull in [or]der to detect the point which ap[pr]oach'd nearest to the continent protesting he would not again put foot in a boat till he had discovered the shortest possible *trajet*. Our separation reminded me of the disastrous incident in Byrons shipwreck ¹ when they were forced to abandon two of their crew on an unknown coast and beheld them at a distance commencing their solitary peregrination along the cliffs.

I must not omit to tell you that Gillows table has arrived and gives great satisfaction. Every one that sees it likes it so much that I dare say I shall have some commissions to send him. His Bill did not much exceed yours being about £30⁰ ready money.

We are now here for a few days but I must be in Edinburgh next week on official duty. I trust however to return about the 20th when we shall be here for the season. I expect this will suit our Hebridean syrens & their Lady Mother ; for we count upon a visit from them & that a comfortable one as I have much to show her. Why should you not accompany them ? It is but a step after all as I will convince you next summer when I have my seven leagued boots on. Charlotte joins in best and kindest compliments to Mrs. Morritt and I ever am My dear Morritt sincerely yours

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK 9th August [1810]

I inclose a note to Mrs. Clephane hoping it will find her at Rokeby.

[Law]

¹ Hon. John Byron, *Voyage round the World*, 1764-66. See before, vol. i. p. 16.

TO ROBERT LEYDEN

[12th August 1810]

SIR,—In answer to your letter¹ I have only to state that I never mentioned your Brother's name in my life without kindness & respect nor did I ever make any private affairs which might be between him & me the subject of conversation with any one, far less give an exaggerated & ridiculous account of them as I am convinced Mr. Dickinson whom I have not seen this very long time did not & could not mention me as his authority I conclude the whole to be an idle report with which I beg to be no more troubled as I think my regard for your brother has been sufficiently manifested to put it beyond question. I am Sir Your Servant

[WALTER SCOTT]

[*Walpole Collection—Copy*]TO LADY DALKEITH²

DEAR LADY DALKEITH,—The Ettrick Bard who compiled the enclosed collection³ which I observe is inscribed

¹ Robert's insolent letter (9th August) is in the *Walpole Collection*: "Mr. Scott, Sir, Lately in a public Company where my Brother happened to be mentioned in course of the conversation, and his success in the East India, Mr. Dickinson Minister of Hobkirk in course of the conversation asserted that you said when my Brother went away you lent him £500 Str. which he had never so much as acknowledged having received so you believed he was a *Scoundrel &c.*"

² This letter, clearly dated by Scott 14th August 1811, must nevertheless belong to 1810. *The Forest Minstrel* published in 1810 would not have been held over for a year before being sent to the noble lady it was dedicated to. Scott writes here of the death of Lord Scott in 1808, but does not say a word about the little daughter, Margaret Harriet, born at Dalkeith on 12th June 1811—the first child born since his death, and to which he and Mrs. Scott have stood as proxy godparents, as related in the letter to Lady Abercorn of 25th July 1811. In July or August 1811 the Dalkeiths have visited the Scotts, but in this letter he does not expect to see Lady Dalkeith in Scotland that year.

³ *The Forest Minstrel ; a Selection of Songs adapted to the most favourite Scottish Airs ; few of them ever published before.* By James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd and others . . . Constable . . . 1810. The dedication runs "To the Stay of Genius and the Shield of Merit the Right Honourable Harriet, Countess of Dalkeith, *The Forest Minstrel* is respectfully inscribed by Her Ladyship's most devoted and humble servant The Editor." Hogg and Cunningham are the only authors other than the anonymous,

to your Ladyship has made it his request that I would transmit a copy for your acceptance. I fear your Ladyship will find but little amusement in it for the poor fellow has just talent sufficient to spoil him for his own trade without having enough to support him by literature.

But I embraced the more readily an opportunity of intruding upon your Ladyships leisure that I might thank you for the very kind & affecting letter with which you honoured me some time ago. You do me justice in believing that I was deeply concerned at the irreparable loss you sustained in the dear & hopeful boy to whom all the friends of the Buccleuch family looked forward with so much confidence. I can safely say that since that inexpressible misfortune I almost felt as if the presence of one with whom the recollection of past happiness might in some degree be associated must have awakened and added to your Ladyships distress from a feeling that scenes of which we were not to speak were necessarily uppermost in the recollection of both. But your Ladyship knows better than I can teach that where all common topics of consolation would be inapplicable Heaven provides for us the best and most effectual curative in the progress of time and in the constant and unremitting discharge of the duties incumbent on the station in which we are placed. Those of your Ladyship are important in proportion to the elevation of your rank and the promising qualities of the young minds which I have with so much pleasure seen you forming and instructing to be comforts I trust to yourself & an honour to society.

Poor Lady Roslin¹ is gone with all the various talent and vivacity that rendered her society so delightful. I regret her loss the more as she died without ever

¹ Presumably the Countess of Rosslyn, wife of Sir James St. Clair Erskine, second Earl of Rosslyn. She was Henrietta Elizabeth, daughter of the Hon. Edward Bouverie, son of Jacob, first Viscount Folkestone. She died on 8th August 1810.

making up some unkindness she had towards me for these foolish politics. It is another example of the great truth that life is too short for the indulgence of animosity.

There will I fear be no chance of your Ladyship being at Bowhill this year though I suppose Lord Dalkeith will be there for a short time in the course of the autumn. I beg my kindest respects to him & Mrs. Scott offers hers to your Ladyship. I have the honour to be with the greatest respect Your Ladyships obliged & very humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 14 *August* 1811 [1810]

[*Buccleuch*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your letter and am quite satisfied that the printing of Swift will proceed most speedily and easily in the house of Messrs. Ramsay & Co. With respect to the inclosed letters they seem to lie out of my department. I will send Messrs. Ramsay vol: XIII at least a considerable part of it in the course of two days with directions about proofs &c. It will give me great pleasure if the change of printing house prove the means of expediting the work which on all acco [*MS. torn here*] I am anxious to get forwards. I am Dear Sir Your very obedt. Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 29 *Augt.* [1810]

The letters shall be returnd with the copy to save postage

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

ASHESTIEL, *Thursday* [Sept. 19-20, 1810]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—Your letter,¹ this morning received, released me from the very painful feeling, that a man of Mr. Coleridge's high talents, which I had always been among the first to appreciate as they deserve, had thought me worthy of the sort of public attack which appeared in the *Courier* of the 15th. The initials are so remarkable, and the trick so very impudent, that I was likely to be fairly duped by it, for which I have to request Mr. Coleridge's forgiveness. I believe attacks of any sort sit as light upon me as they can on any one. If I have had my share of them, it is one point, at least, in which I resemble greater poets—but I should not like to have them come from the hand of contemporary genius. A man, though he does not "wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at," would not willingly be stooped upon by a falcon. I am truly obliged to your friendship for so speedily relieving me from so painful a feeling. The hoax was probably designed to set two followers of literature by the ears, and I daresay will be followed up by something equally impudent. As for the imitations, I have not the least hesitation in saying to you, that I was unconscious at the time of appropriating the goods of others, although I have not the least doubt that several of the passages must have been running in my head. Had I meant to steal, I would have been more cautious

¹ This is a reply to Southey's letter of 17th September 1810: "In the *Courier* of the 15th (which has this evening reached us) is an article pretending to exhibit imitations from your poems and signed S. T. C. At the first sight of this I was certain that S. T. Coleridge had nothing to do with it and upon putting the paper into his hands his astonishment was equal to mine. What may be the motive of this dirty trick Heaven knows. . . . Coleridge declares he will write to the *Courier* disavowing the signature. I know he means to do it, but his actions so little correspond to his intentions that I fear he will delay doing it,—very probably till it is too late. Therefore I lose no time in assuring you that he knows nothing of this petty and paltry attack." See also *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by E. L. Griggs, 1932, vol. ii. p. 61.

to disfigure the stolen goods. In one or two instances the resemblance seems general and casual, and in one, I think, it was impossible I could practise plagiarism, as Ethwald, one of the poems quoted, was published *after* the Lay of the Last Minstrel. A witty rogue, the other day, who sent me a letter subscribed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin poems, which I had never seen or heard of ; yet there was so strong a general resemblance, as fairly to authorize Detector's suspicion.¹

I renounced my Greta excursion in consequence of having made instead a tour to the Highlands, particularly to the Isles. I wished for Wordsworth and you a hundred times. The scenery is quite different from that on the mainland—dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular, merits well its far-famed reputation ; it is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once. I visited Icolmkill also, where there are some curious monuments, mouldering among the poorest and most naked wretches that I ever beheld. Affectionately yours,

W. SCOTT

[*Lockhart*]

¹ "The 'lines of Vida,' which 'Detector' had enclosed to Scott as the obvious original of the address to 'Woman' in *Marmion*, closing with

'When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !'

end as follows ;—and it must be owned that, if Vida had really written them, a more extraordinary example of casual coincidence could never have been pointed out—

'Cum dolor atque supercilio gravis imminet angor,
Fungeris angelico sola ministerio !'

Detector's reference is '*VIDA ad Eranen*, El. II. v. 21 ;'—but it is almost needless to add there are no such lines—and no piece bearing such a title in Vida's works. Detector was no doubt some young college wag, for his letter has a Cambridge postmark."—LOCKHART.

TO CLARKE WHITFIELD

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 24 Sept. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—I am honoured with your valuable packet, containing the music which you have thought it worth your while to compose for the Lady of the Lake, & the kind letter which accompanied it. So far as I (the most inadequate judge of Music in the world) can form any idea of your compositions from a single voice, for in this remote corner we barely command that, I hope you will lose no reputation, and I am sure the author of the words will gain a great deal. I had some idea at the time of publication of sending you the book with one or two Gaelic airs which floated through my head at writing the songs, but a various pressure of business made me leave my poetry as the Ostrich her eggs in the sand. The original air of the Coronach for which you have found one so beautiful was *M'Gregor a ruagh ruagh* (pronounced *O roro*).¹ It is a beautiful & pathetic Celtic melody. I wish you had been with me in a late tour through the Isles, when I heard many wild Hebridean airs sung by our boatmen to their oars, which appeared to deserve both embellishment & preservation.

I should be delighted to furnish you with an unpublished tale for your own exclusive adaptation, but—as the Neapolitan beggar said to the stranger who exhorted him to industry—“Did you but know how lazy I am.” My winter months are employed in official attendance and in the present golden hours of vacation, what with coursing hares by day, and spearing salmon by night I have an extreme disinclination to anything like labour whether in prose or rhyme. When I am once set agoing, I roll like a stone down hill, but the first two or three turns are incredibly unpleasant. I am glad however you like Alice Brand,² because I like it myself,

¹ Clarke's letter had enclosed the words and original air of “Macgregor's Lament.”

² He issued also as a sheet song “The Minstrel's Tale, or Alice Brand.”

and perhaps because the Critics have not given it much of their applause. I like it better than any thing of the kind I ever attempted except *Lochinvar*. If I can feel or flog myself into the humour of making it a tolerable companion you shall have it for Miss Whitfeld who does my minstrelsy so much honour. Indeed did I need a flapper I should be powerfully reminded of my obligations to you by Mrs. Scott, who desires me to make her grateful acknowledgements for the inscription to Alice Brand, of which she feels herself very proud. Lastly let me thank you for your elegant verses, which I heartily wish had a better subject, though I cannot desire they should have a different one. Believe me Dear Sir Yours truly

W. SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, BY SELKIRK, 30th September 1810

I HAVE not my dear friend had much to say since I returned from my Highland excursion. The isles in many particulars more than answered my expectation. The cavern in the uninhabited island of Staffa in particular is the most wonderful place of the kind that imagination can conceive. The sides are composed of basaltic columns exactly like those of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland with which you are doubtless well acquainted. The angles of those pillars are as it were cemented to each other by a sort of yellow concretion resembling spar or marble which forms a striking and curious contrast to the sable colour of the granite columns themselves. The arch is as high as that of a cathedral and has nearly the same regularity of shape the ribbed pillars bending towards each other as if to meet at the top. They have however at the roof a sort of ceiling formed of the ends of other pillars which have been broken off in the course of the natural convulsion by which the cavern was formed. This immense

and magnificent cavern opens full upon the Atlantic ocean whose billows roll up to the extremity of the cave with a noise which even in the calmest day would deafen thunder. When the weather is extremely calm you can enter the cavern in a boat but the least swell renders the attempt very dangerous. You can also reach the extremity by scrambling along a line of broken pillars of unequal height which extends along the righthand side of the cave. We did both—The proprietor of the isle Macdonald of Staffa a fine high-spirited young Chieftain was our pilot and guide through the Hebrides. He is much loved by his people whose prosperity he studies very much. I wish I could say so of the Duke of Argyle but his isles are in a wretched state. That of Iona in particular where it is said Christianity was first planted in Scotland and which still exhibits many curious and even splendid remains of monastic grandeur, is now in a most deplorable condition. The inhabitants are so numerous in proportion to the size of the island that (although it is a fertile spot comparing it with the other isles around it) it is barely sufficient to support them in the most wretched state possible in ordinary years—in those of scarcity they must starve for they have nothing to pay for imported corn—Much of this misery might I apprehend be remedied by a well regulated encouragement to fishermen for the sea abounds with fish of every description. But such a system to prevent peculation and abuse must be carried on under the countenance of an active benevolent, and at the same time a resolute Landlord. We were surrounded on the beach by boys and girls almost naked all begging for charity and some offering pebbles for sale. My wife bought some which have been since transformed into a very pretty necklace.

In the Isle of Ulva where the Laird of Staffa has his house we were treated with something like feudal splendour. His people received us under arms and with a discharge of musketry and artillery. His piper was a

constant attendant on our parties and wakened us in the morning with his music. The people are a wild and hardy race very fond of music and poetry which they chant perpetually to their oars. While we were at Staffa one of the Boatmen who could not speak a word of English came forward and made me a speech in which there was a great deal of compliment on account of my being "the great bard of the lowland border" and "burnishing the shields of ancient chieftains," with much more figurative eulogy of which I regretted I could not get an accurate translation. It concluded with acquainting me with their determination to name a remarkable pillar of the cavern after me to be called "Clachan an Bhaird Sassenach mohr" or the stone of the great Lowland bard. The ceremony was concluded by a solemn dram of whiskey by way of libation. So you see my dear Lady Abercorn that poetry retains its honours even where it is not understood—Perhaps it is owing to the same indulgence that your *protégée* the *Lady of the Lake* has met with even more popular favour than any of her predecessors. When the edition now in the press has issued forth it will make the number of copies published within about six months amount to seventeen thousand a success I believe unexampled in bookselling when the work was not of a political nature.

I hear the Priory is greatly enlarged. It is not likely I shall see it soon a London journey being always attended with a certain expense and I want to save my money to buy a corner among my native hills and build a cottage *à mon gré*. I beg my most respectful compliments to the Ladies and to the Marquis not forgetting Lord Hamilton whose health I hope is confirmed. Believe me dear Lady Abercorn with great respect your much obliged and most respectful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

[October 1810]

MY DEAR MISS CLEPHANE,—We have been in town for a few days and leave it on Saturday to enjoy a few days more of this propitious weather by Tweedside. I regret to learn by report from Lady Clerk as Mrs. Scott did from personal enquiry at Porto Bello that your arm is not quite reestablished which is a matter of sincere regret to all who know the many excellent purposes to which you put it. I shall be happy to hear that you are gaining strength though slowly. When you happen to be in Edinburgh will you call at Sandersons and have a look at a harp set with Iona pebbles which he is making for Miss Baillie. You promised me a Gaelic mottoe in the old character—it should not exceed two or three words as “The Harp of Albin” or “Let me be heard again” or in short anything you please that can be twind concisely into Gaelic. If you will furnish Sanderson with a copy of the characters he will have them carefully engraved. I understand we are getting a Gaelic professor and I intend to study the language this winter if he can afford me a private hour for I am too old a boy to go to a public class.

No late news from Ashestiel but the last despatches hear that Charles has suddenly claped a spoonful of hot porridge on his sisters head in imitation as he was pleased to maintain of Minnie’s Bennison. So you see Mrs. Clephane’s legendary lore is not forgotten but brought into practical use in my nursery.

Mrs. Scott joins in offering kindest and best respects to Mrs. Clephane and Miss Anne Jane at your Carron¹ unknown and I am very truly dear Miss Clephane your obliged and humble servant

W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Thursday*

There is not the least hurry in my commission.

[Northampton]

¹ i.e. Carron Hall. See next letter to Morritt.

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT,—I do not long delay answering your kind letter and assuring you of my sincere sympathy in the distressing events¹ to which you have lately been exposed. The beautiful and feeling verses by Dr. Johnson to the memory of his humble friend Levett and which with me though a tolerably ardent Scotchman attone for a thousand of his prejudices open with a sentiment which every years acquaintance with this Vanitas Vanitatum presses more fully on our conviction.

Condemnd to Hopes delusive mine
As on we toil from day to day
By sudden blast or slow decline
Our social comforts melt away.

I am sure Mrs. Morritt must have deeply felt these repeated strokes of misfortune. Let me hope that the Mrs Cholmly you regret was not the mother of my interesting and accomplishd young acquaintance who accompanied us upon our Steeple-hunting expedition and of the young gentleman I knew formerly in Edinr. From the expressions you use I rather fear it was the same and must regret your loss the more as I had the pleasure of knowing her and her family. But what can we say—unless by referring to the oft repeated and trite topic of consolation—it is the lot of humanity and the charter we live by.

We have been more than once tantalized by the reports of freinds who were going to Rokeby or coming from Rokeby but your late melancholy avocations have prevented their designs. The Clephanes arrived here from Carron Hall or some such named place in Yorkshire but without taking you as they intended in their progress hitherward. The eldest girl had a fall at Melrose & came here with a disabled arm owing as she imagined to a bad sprain but I was a little alarmd at its

¹ The death of Mrs. Morritt's brother, James Stanley, and another friend.

totally unmanageable state and on a surgeons being sent for it proved a bad dislocation of two days standing. She behaved quite like a highland heroine upon the occasion and neither shriekd nor groand nor winced though the operation of adjusting the joint must have been terribly painful. I hear she has since nearly altogether recoverd the use of the limb. Next we had Mrs. Apreece returning to England after having been during the last winter at Edinburgh a lioness of the first magnitude & reputation and she also proposed being at Rokeby but was apprized of the state of your family.

I have little to complain of the Edin^r. Review.¹ Jeffrey sent me the sheets with a kind and for him an apologetic letter saying he was sensible that there was some needless asperity in his Review of Marmion etc. and that he had studied in delivering his sincere opinion to the public to do it in a way that should not be unnecessarily harsh to me or my freinds. And indeed his general tone is much more civil and respectful than is usual for the Review when an author is neither a philosopher nor a Foxite. But after all and among freinds I think it would puzzle him to make a popular pudding after the receipt which he has given as mine and I protest to you that I have been (like the poor Lady who studied anatomy) ignorant till this moment how many pretty things went to the making of me.

I will take care to enter your claim for the 2d Volume of Clarkes travels.² The first is reviewd in the Quarterly

¹ "I am now sensible that there were needless asperities in my review of Marmion, and from the hurry in which I have been forced to write I daresay there may be some here also. I have bungled your poetical character too by beginning my sketch on a scale too large for my canvas . . . but I think you have generosity enough to construe me rightly in spite of all these things and to believe me when I say that I am sincerely *proud* both of your genius and of your glory and that I value your friendship much more highly than most either of my literary or political opinions." From Jeffrey's letter (11th August) with advance proofs of his review of the *Lady of the Lake*.—*Walpole Collection*. See *Familiar Letters*, i. 185-6, and Partington, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

² *Travels in various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, by Edward Daniel Clarke, LL.D. Part the First, Russia, Tartary, and Turkey. Cambridge, 1810. Clarke had travelled as tutor in various lands. In 1808 he was made

by our freind Geo: Ellis. He was long intimate with the Russian court and has probably determined to screen our freind the Bear a little. I have not seen the Review though it is I think out & probably shall not till I get to Edinburgh. But I have no doubt the said Bear will prove a very filthy monster upon the whole.

The weather till these few days has been delightful beyond what the memory of the oldest persons can retain any trace of and fortunate it was so for the harvest was so late that under less favourable auspices than this astonishing track of fair weather it could never have been put into the Barnyard.

I have very little prospect indeed of getting to London next year. My Commission is ended and sooth to say the expences of a London journey do not suit a poets purse altogether so well as God willing I would desire they did. But we must meet and Mrs. M. and you being the more loco-motive persons will I trust take another peep of Scotland where you have still so much to see and I will promise if you do to see you safely back into the West Riding. Have you read the Edin^r. Register? If not do get it—the history is written by Southey and though with some tinge of opinions which neither you nor I approve yet there is much eloquence and a great deal of what every body must admire. The principles respecting france are particularly excellent the general tone of political impartiality gives them great weight and to my knowlege they are beginning to *tell* among those who would have calld them *party clamour* through any *medium*. I am informd by the Ballantynes the second Volume is still better—it has not yet appeard.

It is needless to say how much our kindest and best wishes attend Mrs. Morritt. Believe me ever yours truly

ASHESTIEL 3d October [1810]

WALTER SCOTT

[Law]

Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge and in 1810 Librarian. So far from screening "the bear" Clarke is reproved by Ellis for the coarse and ignoble tone of his invective. He made use of Reginald Heber's journals.

TO MISS SMITH

[ASHESTIEL 4 *October* 1810]

LEST I should relapse my dear Miss Smith into my unfriendly and ungracious silence I hasten to express the remorse I have experienced at your kind letter which I have so little deserved. But the truth is and I wish I had a better apology that the spirit of procrastination sometimes quite overcomes me till an answer so long delayed has neither grace nor good manners and I am finally terrified from setting about it at all. I might indeed sometimes plead and with truth the weariness of fingers whose daily bread depends in some degree on their daily exercise but I should be ashamed to state to you such an apology in a stronger light than the fact admits of: for the truth is that there are weeks and months in which I do not only not use pen and ink but have a sort of horror at the very sight of them. This is more especially the case in this retreat which we are just about to leave for the winter after having enjoyed an uninterrupted track of the most delightful and settled good weather which our northern and unstable climate has ever afforded us in my remembrance. I hope you have enjoyed the same in the beautiful scenery where you have been conversant and that as your climate was more genial it has been equally uniform and serene. Mrs. Scott and I employed the early part of the vacation in a tour to the Hebrides which I had never visited although I was in early youth acquainted with the mainland opposite to them. My eldest little girl accompanied us and being quite a little doll whom we could fling to sleep in any corner she was no inconvenience to us while I hope she acquired some degree of taste for the beauties of nature which as it is one of the most attainable is also one of the most certain sources of enjoyment which life offers us. The grandeur of the scenes which the islands afford is a little qualified by the sombre and savage state

in which it is expressed. Few or no trees, huge barren hills wrap'd in endless mist torn by unceasing cataracts where the waters bear no more proportion to the excavations and ravines which they tear out of the bosom of the hills than human passions do to the consequences of their indulgence—such are many of the aspects of nature we viewed. These however do not apply to the Highland mainland where the lochs are usually clothed with the most beautiful birch wood. Nor are the isles without their charms although they consist rather as far as I saw in the eccentricities than in the ordinary productions of nature. The caverns of Staffa struck me more than any thing I ever looked on in my life and the ever changing ocean with all its endless varieties affords to those who live on its margin studies sufficient to compensate for the want of the usual clothing of wood and verdure.

I have heard so much of the wonders of Killarney that I hope I shall one day pay them a visit and believe me I should be proud to profit by the hope you give me of being made known to Lady Kingston. I am much honoured by the good opinion of the Irish nation whose praise must be always most valuable to a poet because they are not only a people of infinite genius but of a warmth of heart and feeling not perhaps generally appreciated either by your countrymen or mine. The English gentleman in a new poem (which we shall suppose dated from Ashestiel) asks something that awakes him during the perusal from an habitual contempt of that which goes on around him ; a Scotchman likes and praises the work of a countryman for the same reason that in London he would walk half a mile further to purchase his ounce of snuff where the sign of the Highlander announces a North Briton. But an Irishman's praise is that of feeling and though a Scotchman must always be a Scotchman and like his own countrymen better than those of the other allied kingdoms yet in doing justice to all three he must allow the praise of spirit and sentiment to the Irish.

As I have been long trammel'd with an edition of Swift's works which I should be anxious to render respectable I hope to visit Ireland to endeavour to gain additional light on his history. But whether this will happen next year or no depends upon many trifling contingencies. Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest compliments. We will be both most happy when we can see you here. Miss Car. Douglas,¹ but that you doubtless have heard has married into her mother's Clan to Capt. Scott of the R. Navy of the family of Gala in this county. Lady Douglas was well when I heard. Yours my dear Miss Smith very sincerely & respectfully

WALTER SCOTT

I am glad you intend to play Helen in the Family Legend and I wish I was near enough to give you my instructions about the proper dress.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO THE REV. E. BERWICK

MY DEAR SIR,—Since I had the pleasure of writing to you last² I have been wandering among our Western Islands in a constant change of place and of course have been very ill situated for regular correspondence. I have now two of your highly valued letters to answer and I am heartily ashamed that it should be so considering how much the balance of obligation is in every respect against me— Swift has suffered somewhat from my rambling but still more from interruptions occasioned by

¹ The daughter of Lady Frances Douglas *née* Scott, sister of the Duke of Buccleuch. See Florence McCunn, *Sir Walter Scott's Friends*, pp. 188-204.

² Berwick had written on the 25th August 1810: "Delighted with the Lady of the Lake," as are Lady Charlotte Moira and Lord Moira, who places it "above the other poems." He is hurt by the review in the *Quarterly* of his *Apollonius*: "The observation passed on the translation which concludes the article is out of the way of fair criticism and is rather unmannerly—What do you say? Look at it and tell me if you do not agree?—write soon."

some change of printers. I cannot possibly do more than sketch the life until I obtain access to a very extensive and curious collection of original Letters in the hands of Lady Castlereagh containing the correspondence of Swift, Pope, Gay &c with Mrs. Howard afterwards Lady Suffolk. If this collection really contains many unpublished letters it will be the most curious source of information to which I have been as yet able to procure access. Lady Castlereagh has kindly promised that I shall see them & I believe I shall go to London on purpose in Spring next. Meanwhile I get on as well as I can with the Works themselves— As this will probably be the last work I shall engage in as Editor I am desirous it should have novelty and I feel how much it will owe to your friendship. Poor Cooper Walker¹ whose kind interest in its progress was equal to your own has been snatched from his friends, and his studies, so that the burden which he supported jointly with you is now like to descend upon you alone.

I must not lose myself in my own pursuits without thanking you kindly and sincerely for the pleasure yours have afforded me. Appollonius is an extremely curious and interesting book exhibiting in a strong & impressive point of view the force and the weakness of human wisdom and heathen philosophy. You have made us a most acceptable present and I am happy to think our Northern Critics are likely to be of the same opinion. At least Jeffery speaks of the work very handsomely as I am informed. I never enquire into the Secrets of their prison house though the Arch-Critic and I are great private friends but if I find an opportunity I will endeavour to spur him into carrying his good opinion into activity. I remember the passage you allude to in the conclusion of the *Quarterly*² which is to say the least both

¹ Several letters of Cooper Walker on Swift are among the Abbotsford papers.

² See *ante*, p. 322, note.

unhandsomely said and unjust in itself and very difficult of reconciliation to the previous matter. How Gifford came to let it stand I know not ; for it is different from what he promised me.

You are very good for interesting yourself so much in the *Lady of the Lake*. It was hastily written, more so perhaps than any of my former attempts, but has succeeded uncommonly well, the edition now in the press will make up 20,000 Copies—a pretty good number considering that only the first canto was in existence last year at this time and that it only came forth a few months ago. I should like before I hang my harp on the willows for ever to try an Irish tale mixed with something of our own Hebrides. But this is only a flitting wish which always comes across me when I think of your warm-hearted and highly endowed countrymen.

Depend on my bringing forward Appolonius in every way in my power. I wish I had seen him before I sent forth the *Lady of the Lake* as I could easily have made a niche. That in the life of Swift will be as graceful and appropriate as possible for the quotation you sent me in your favour of the 2nd is very interesting. I have not seen the *British Review* of your work. I have a great mind to try to review it for the *Annual Review* despite my want of *lore* if I can make interest for the introduction of such a Critique as I am likely to make. Believe me Ever my dear Sir your truly obliged & very faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE 8th October 1810

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE, MOLESWORTH
STREET, DUBLIN

SIR,—I am honoured with your flattering letter and the elegant verses¹ enclosed and however much I may be sensible that your praises exceed my deserts, it can hardly be expected I should have the self denial to refuse my consent to their being made public in the way you have been pleased to choose. I should be extremely happy if the services of my publishers the Ballantynes of Edinburgh could be at all useful in giving celebrity and circulation to your intended publication—any little interest I have with the Booksellers is all I have to offer in Requital or rather acknowledgement of the honor you design me. I have the honor to be Your obliged humble servt W. S.

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE 10th Oct 1810.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

EDINBURGH, 11 Oct. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—This accompanies a set of poor Miss Seward's Poems, which I hope you will have the kindness to accept. Another cover will convey to you my three poems, which I regret to find have not reached you. Miss Seward left the greater part of her correspondence to Mr. Constable, of Edinburgh, who is I believe taking measures to publish them. It is very extensive, occupying many folio MSS., for she kept a copy of almost every letter which she wrote.

I will be much obliged to you to send your valued publications under cover to Mr. Freeling, or to John Wilson Croker, Esq. either of whom will forward them in safety.

¹ Hartstonge's letter is not preserved, but in his reply of 16th October he thanks Scott for his kind offer of publishers and hopes that the transcript of the MS. he encloses "is so legible . . . that the publishers may have no trouble in that department." Scott was a little rash in his promise here and has to climb down later.

As I know you are a great master of northern lore, and interested in all that belongs to it, I am anxious to bespeak your interest in favour of a publication intended to illustrate these studies. It is a quarto volume entitled *Northern Antiquities*, to be published by the Ballantynes of Edinburgh, for Messrs. Weber and Robert Jameson. May I hope that you will, either for this or the next volume, favour us with a communication? The subject (provided it be connected with antiquities) is entirely at your choice. I wished to add to the packet I transmit for your acceptance, a copy of *Sir Tristrem*, in whom as a hero of Cornwall you must doubtless be interested; but the edition is entirely out of print.

I am very glad indeed you like the *Lady of the Lake*; but, if you knew how much I admire your poem on *Local Attachment*, you would not have threatened me with so terrible a compliment as that of laying down your own harp.¹ Believe me, my dear Sir, very truly, your much obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

P.S. Some time ago (several years now) I met with two very pleasant young men from Cornwall, Mr. Carlyon and Mr. Collins; to the former of whom I was indebted for the honour of being introduced to your notice. When you favour me with a line, I should like much to know how they have fared in life, which they were then about to enter upon.

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

¹ On 21st September Polwhele wrote that he had intended to communicate some of Miss Seward's letters but fears such a communication is too late, "unless an additional Vol. of 'Correspondence' may be in contemplation. . . . I have a packet for you including a new Edit. of my 'Poems,' a new Vol. of 'Sermons,' 'Hist. of Devon & Cornwall' &c &c. . . . Have you any objection to add Miss Seward's Poems &c to your long promised Vols. of Poetry which you informed me were on the bookseller's list, but which have never reached me to this moment?" He concludes with a postscript in which he says: "Your '*Lady of the Lake*' engrosses my whole attention. It has 'absorbed me quite'! I shall never pretend to write another verse."—*Walpole Collection*.

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I send a packet addressed to Mr. Arbuthnot containing a copy of the much honoured *Lady* to wait upon her kindest and best patroness. The quartos have long vanished nor can I even guess what is become of yours, since you did not find it at the Priory where I desired it might be sent. I add the little collection which I hope your Ladyship will approve of.

The treatises on the Fiorin are very interesting and if they are found to be grounded on practical experience cannot fail to be of the last consequence to Scotland. I observe Dr. Richardson¹ speaks a good deal about the Duke of Buccleuch's water-meadows. With these I am something acquainted—What they may do with Fiorin I know not, but they are not very productive in their present state. The engineer laid the blame on the quality of the water of the Yarrow which being a run from a large lake is remarkably pure and limpid very fit for poetry in which it has been often celebrated but not so well adapted it would seem for water-meadows. After abusing it a great deal the fellow closed his charges against it by comparing it to what I suppose he thought the basest liquor in the world. "It has no more heart" quoth he swearing to his assertion "than as much *small-beer*." A very odd simile for the classical Yarrow thought your minstrel. I daresay the Duke will try the Fiorin which if it succeed will render his extensive system of irrigation much more valuable than it will ever be otherwise.

I would willingly make you my kind and partial friend the promise you request respecting my future literary engagements. But the Public with many other properties of spoiled children has all their eagerness after novelty

¹ William Richardson (1740-1820), geologist, became rector of Moy and Clonfele, Co. Antrim. He wrote extensively on the value of Irish fiorin grass. Scott and the Lighthouse Commissioners were entertained by him at Portrush near the conclusion of their voyage in September 1814.

and were I to dedicate my time entirely to poetry they would soon tire of me. I must therefore I fear continue to edit a little till circumstances set me more above the necessity of depending upon my pen for an important part of my income. Whenever the time comes that I can with due attention to my own family lay aside my prose-pen I assure you my dear friend I shall do it with great pleasure—for as the Neapolitan beggar says, “ You don’t know how lazy I am.”

I fear all our farmers would laugh at me were I to attempt the Fiorinn. For although they might pay me some deference as a lawyer or a poet or even for finding a hare or spearing a salmon I fear my agricultural reputation stands too low among them to give [the] experiment fair play. But I have an excellent cool-headed practical farmer for my neighbour whom I will put upon the experiment.¹

I heard of Leyden some time ago. He is doing excellently well in India, has a good office (something of a judicial situation I think) & a large income, & is acquiring knowledge & saving money. He is supposed to have exceeded the limits of Sir W. Jones’s researches.

I am happy to hear Lady Hamilton is to be confined & trust your wishes will be accomplished in the sex. But should it prove a little girl it promises boys hereafter as Shakespeare tells us.

¹ Lady Abercorn, writing on 10th October, is of the opinion that *The Lady of the Lake* ought to ensure Scott “£4000 for the next [poem] which I hope is already begun. I should not, were I to gratify my selfish inclination, allow you time to eat, drink, or sleep, so impatient am I for more from your pen . . . and *promise me* I never shall again see your name as editor to any ones works but yr own. It is quite unworthy of you : now answer this particularly.” Then she alludes to a promise she made when in Ireland that she would send him “some of Dr. Richardsons pamphlets on Fiorin grass . . . I wish very much you wd. try the fiorin yourself, and encourage it as much as possible, it is a most wonderful grass . . . the Scotch writer I conclude will or has made experiments at Dumfries. Whenever I go there you shall meet me, and we will look about the farms, for I am quite sanguine about Fiorin. . . . Lady Hamilton please God will be confined in Feby.—I trust to God she will have a son.”—*Walpole Collection*.

I am quite idle just now as to poetry and have no idea of writing anything serious in that way for a year or two at least. But whether I keep my resolution or not is uncertain for the Lady of the Lake was a very sudden thought and begun only twelve months ago. I will let you my dear Lady Marchioness know so soon as I engage in anything likely to interest you. Have you seen a periodical work called the Edinr. Annual Register—if not pray get it—the history is written with great spirit though in some parts I dislike its political tone & some of the detached articles that on the changes intended in Scotland by the last Administration is given to me by the public—falsely however—it is a paper of great merit. I wish the Marquis would look at it. There is a good smart review of modern poetry in which I come in for a sugar plumb [*sic*] & a buffet but to say truth I am grown a little insensible both to the one & the other.¹

Believe me dear Lady Abercorn Ever your honoured
and [*hole in paper*]

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 15 October 1810

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

EDINBURGH, 15 Oct. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure to write to you yesterday under the frank of Mr. Croker of the Admiralty, forwarding a set of Miss Seward's works. But as I am uncertain whether this parcel may not reach you first, I trouble you with these few lines, to say that I enclose the Poems which you ought to have had long ago. I am sorry the Marmion does not rank with the others ; but by some whim of the proprietors they have put it in the present shape, and I cannot find an octavo copy. The

¹ Scott's own review. See p. 283, note.

volumes you so kindly destine me, will reach me safely if sent under cover to J. Wilson Croker, Esq. Secretary to the Admiralty.

Referring myself for other matters to my former letter,
I am ever truly yours,

W. SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

TO CHARLES SIMPSON

EPITAPH

To him who asks why o'er this tablet spread
In female grace the willow droops her head?
Why on her branches silent and unstrung
The sculptor's hand a marble harp has hung?
O'er what quenched lamp yon mourner seems to sigh?
For whom yon Cherub points a brighter sky?
What poet's flame sighs smothered here in dust?
What Christian hopes the rising of the Just?
Lo! one brief line an answer sad supplies
Honour'd beloved and mourn'd, here Seward lies
Her worth her warmth of heart our sorrows say
Go seek her genius in her living lay.¹

MY DEAR SIR,—Though the above by no means pleases me it is simpler and better than anything which after several attempts I have been able to achieve. Having left your letter describing the design of the monument in Edinburgh I am not sure that the lines alluding to it are correct but if you think the verses tolerable in point of general effect they can easily be altered so as to make them applicable with due accuracy to the emblems of the sculptor. Trifling as the lines are I hope you will at least accept the attempt as a small mark of my anxious wish to do all I can to shew my respect for Miss Seward's memory and my regard for your wishes. I could have

¹ The above version of the epitaph on Miss Seward differs considerably from that printed in the second edition of *The Vision of Don Roderick*, 1811, p. 163.

easily thrown more eulogy into the epitaph but it seemed better taste to leave it to be inferred from the propriety of the emblems, the regret of her friends and the value of her literary remains.

I hope the books have at length reached you. If not be kind enough to write to Longman and Company Booksellers Paternoster Row directing how they should be sent. I beg my kind compliments to Mr. White and am with best respects to your family Dear Sir Your faithful humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE 25 *October* 1810

I dont like my first attempt well enough to send it to you although the enclosed might appear to more advantage by shewing you that a worse is possible.

[*Owen D. Young*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 24th *October* 1810

It would be very difficult for me to express how much I am indebted to your Ladyship for your kind interference in my behalf with the possessors of the precious letters of Dryden which is the more flattering as Malone was refused access to them when he undertook his *Life of Dryden*. I will be extremely happy to have the honour of being introduced to Lord Malmesbury and by his means to Lord Whitworth and I hope to be in town in spring to avail myself of their liberal and kind permission to copy these letters, as well as to return my personal thanks to my kind intercessor.

I wish from my heart I could transport myself to the priory just now for I am here on some official duty without a soul to speak to having left my whole family at my farm. The common phrase of *Nobody in town* is metaphorical with the Great in London, and only means there is nobody one knows ; but here it is almost literal at

this season—the grass grows in the streets and you would absolutely think that the place had been visited by the plague. The few natives that are left are run mad with politics and bite and scratch each other's eyes out. To complete the whole I went yesterday to visit a person who has just taken possession of a little old pigeon-house kind of a castle near this town, and entertains his guests according to the ancient Caledonian fashion with the martial music of the great war-bagpipe played by a Highlander in complete array who strutted up and down the little hall in which we dined during the whole time of dinner ; so that if there were a single being left to speak one sentence of common sense I have not an ear left to listen to him my whole head being yet ringing with the tremendous music of yesterday. I will now proceed to copy some of the Ballads, lest my packet be too weighty for the cover. The first refers to the Massacre of the Monks of Bangor who about 610 marched in procession to Chester then besieged by the heathen king of North-umberland and were cut to pieces by his soldiers.

When the heathen trumpets clang
Round beleaguered Chester rang
Veiled nun and friar grey
Marched from Bangors fair Abbaye
High their holy anthem sounds
Cestria's vale the note rebounds
Floating down the silvan Dee
O miserere Domine !

[*The burden of a Monkish hymn,*
“*Have mercy, O Lord !*”]

On the long procession goes
Glory round their crosses glows
And the Maiden-mother mild
In their peaceful banners smiled
Who might think such holy band
Doomed to feel unhallowed hand
Such was the divine decree
O miserere Domine !

Woe to Brocmael's feeble hand
Woe to Olfrid's bloody brand
Hands that censers only swung
Bands that anthems only sung
Met the Northern bow and bill
Heard the war-cry wild and shrill
Woe to Saxon cruelty
O miserere Domine !

Weltering amid warriors slain
Spurned by steeds with bloody main
Slaughtered down by impious blade
Bangors peaceful monks are laid
Word of parting rest unspoken
Mass unsung & bread unbroken
For their souls for charity
Sing miserere Domine !

Bangor o'er their murder wail
Long thy ruins told the tale.
Shattered tower & broken arch
Long recalled the woeful march
On thy shrine no tapers burn
Never shall thy priests return
The pilgrim sighs & sings for thee
O miserere Domine !

I have other four little tales or singsong kind of verses to add to this dismal ditty but I will not copy them at present because I should disappoint my little wife, who insists that notwithstanding the munificence of Lady Abercorn in equipping me with eternal pens I am not the most legible writer in the world and she therefore claims the task of being Clerk upon the occasion were it only to show though in so trifling a matter how much she is as well as I ever your Ladyship's most respectful and most faithful servant,

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO JOHN MURRAY¹

DEAR SIR,—After carefully looking over the series of novels which I reinclose I find I can make nothing of them. The canvas is in fact too narrow for so extensive a subject. I have written to Mr. Gifford wishing to review Polwhele's works or the theatrical *Row*. The last has never I think been attempted at least in a general point of view and might I think be made a pleasing and original article. Should Mr. G. approve you will be so good as send me such of the trashy publications concerning it as may be most current. I must have a text though the sermon will rather refer to the thing itself than the publications concerning it. I will be happy to look over the article on Crabbe should W. G. wish it, but it is always difficult (I find it so at least) to do much in the way of addition or emendation unless the general colouring and style should agree more than is likely.

I have written a long letter to Gifford on all these matters. I am greatly obliged to you for settling with my Newspaper man which I suppose will about square accots between us for my two little articles in last number. I am Dear Sir Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 26 October [1810]

[*Sir Alfred J. Law*]

¹ This letter, not in Smiles' *Memoir*, belongs to 1810, for Murray wrote on 28th August of this year that an article on Crabbe had been promised for their last number, "but after Jeffreys had appeared we were told that the writer wished to enlarge it & to send it for our present number but we have not seen it . . . when it does arrive it will be sent to you & Mr Gifford will feel grateful if you will condescend to be its editor for which I entreat the favor of you to have a few notes prepared." The "series of novels" were volumes of a collection of novels edited by Mrs. Barbauld, "which I think you will not dislike to favour us with a review of." He sent these along with Hunt's critical essays, "prefixed to a few novels which he edited." The review of Crabbe appeared in the November 1810 number. "My two little articles" were probably the reviews of Grahame's *British Georgics* and the article on Evans's *Old Ballads* and Aikin on *Song-writing* of the May number in that year.

TO MISS CLEPHANE

I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Miss Clephane did I omit to thank you for your kind letter and excellently appropriate mottoe. Sanderson sent home the harp the evening we were about to leave Edinburgh and I thought it as well to keep it in my own possession until I should have an opportunity of consulting with you. The limb of the trinket which must bear the inscription is not above three inches long but I conceive that as the Gaelic character like that of the Runic is somewhat angular your very pretty device can be engraved within that space. Of this you will judge better when you see the little harp. It looks pretty enough and nothing can suit it better than your Buail tend a myhean Albain nam ferrn—we can omit the two last words should there not be room which however I shall regret.

I should be delighted with an opportunity to see Steel hand which I should venerate highly. Should you ever venture to transport it to Edinburgh I will have a drawing and an accurate account drawn up of it for the Northern Antiquities a work in which I take some interest from regard to two very worthy and ingenious men for whose emolument it is published.¹ I think of giving them my song of the Clans which I will most willingly attempt to enlarge by Saxonising those you are so good as to recommend to me. I have I believe three already Macleans

¹ The above motto Miss Clephane had translated, in her letter of 20th October, as: "Strike the string daughter of Albin of songs." She had been to Kirkness to pay her respects to Steel Hand and the Carlogie Horn. "The former I prize even more than the Bugle—it is a sort of Palladium." She then outlines the story of Steel Hand. When Clephane of Carlogie was fighting by the side of the King of Scotland, he so spread his shield and arm that he averted a blow from the enemy intended for the monarch. His own arm was cut off. In gratitude the king gave him the royal arms, sent to Rome for "an arm of costly workmanship & curious mechanism," which "by means of springs in the palm of the hand" would enable him to hold his bridle. "This arm, holding a helmet, was taken by Clephane for his crest with the motto "Ut jam paratior" . . . I would desire my old hand & arm to be brought to Edinr. . . . that you may see it."—*Walpole Collection*. See note, p. 489.

Warsong and the Coronach over Sir Lachlan and the farewell to MacKenneth¹—I have not been able to ride for this week past owing to a foolish cold so I have been busy brushing the jackets of some old Swiss ditties upon the battles of Sempach, Morat and other encounters with the Knights of Austria and Burgundy. They were not good as poetry but curious notwithstanding. I think I promised your sister and you a curious collection of Swiss music which my friend Skene knowing my predilection for national song picked up for me at Berne. The words are of course what I value the collection chiefly for, but I should be delighted to find that you could select any of the tunes as worthy of your notice.

The weather seems now breaking in sad earnest and the wind comes down the Vale of Tweed with fury fit to sweep forests before it, if there were any in its path. I have rarely heard a higher tempest than is roaring round our solitary dwelling at this moment. All these things make us think of Castle Street with less reluctance and it will be an inducement the more that I hope to see you well and the arm in its wonted state of active exertion. Pray take care of it however. An iron hand might have suited the rough work of the old Knight of Carslogie or Goetz of Berliching[en] a famous German freebooting noble distinguished by a similar accommodation but it would be a wretched substitute for your own either upon the harp or with the pencil. Adieu my dear Miss Clephane remember Mrs. Scott and me kindly to Mrs. M. Clephane and Miss Anne Jane. We shall be in town on the 12 Novr. and hope soon to meet. Meanwhile I remain yours very truly and respectfully.

W. S.

ASHESTIEL, 27 October 1810.

[Northampton]

¹ "Farewell to Mackenneth, great Earl of the North," etc., which in the *Collected Poems* is ascribed to 1815 and followed by an Imitation evoked by the death of the last Lord Seaforth, "Caberfae." See later. Vol. IV, p. 13 and note.

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

SIR,—So soon as I was honoured with your packet I transmitted it to Messrs. Ballantyne my publishers and am sorry to find that they cannot engage in the publication at present for reasons they assign in the enclosed letter which I yesterday received.¹ I know indeed that their hands are fully occupied considering the restraint which the present state of Credit imposes upon trade of all kinds.—I assure you Sir I should have had pleasure in being useful to you on this occasion and regret that my wishes have been beyond my power. I shall keep the Manuscript safely until you are pleased to advise me how I can return it with safety. I should suppose you will find some London bookseller very willing to engage in the publication. I have the honor to be Sir Your obliged humble servt.

W. S.

ASHESTIEL, 1st Nov. 1810

[*Abbotsford Copies*]TO ALEXANDER PRINGLE, OF WHITEBANK, YAIR,
SELKIRK

MY DEAR SIR,—I have not the least objection to pay £105 (One hundred guineas) for my present possessions at Ashestiel as I am quite satisfied that if you did not think such a rise of rent reasonable in the circumstances you would not propose it ; and I agree with you that it will be better to go on from year to year than to enter into a new lease. I would only put you in mind that I wish the fishing to be entirely at my disposal as a cross-graind tenant might be troublesome upon that point. I think

¹ Hartstonge replied to this on 12th November, expressing his regret ("Literary distinction and not profit was my much wished for and my long denied reward") and requesting Scott to take charge of the poems meantime. See Scott's next letter. He goes on to give information about Swift and concludes by again apologising for having sent the poems, encouraged by Scott's offer of the "services of your publisher."

also that the Landlord out of the additional rent might spare the wood for the new gates when he cuts any that fit ; I paying workmanship &c. But on this point I come as they say in your will.

Mrs. Scott joins me in kind compliments to Mrs. Pringle and I am with great regard My dear Sir Very truly your faithful Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 20 *November*. 1810

The water will not I think be an object to a tenant though it is a sine qua non with me.

[*Miss Mary Lockhart*]

To [NAMES OF ADDRESSEES NOT GIVEN]

GENTLEMEN,—I beg the favour of you to transmit to Sir J. Stevenson and Mr. Cooke my best thanks for the music which they have so obligingly transmitted to me & have the goodness to add that I am much flattered by their finding so many passages in the *Lady of the Lake* worthy of their attention. I am obliged to you gentlemen likewise for the trouble you have taken in my behalf & remain Your mo: obedient Servant

EDINR. 27 *Novr*. 1810

WALTER SCOTT

No address.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

To JOANNA BAILLIE

I SHOULD not have been so long your debtor my dear Miss Baillie for your kind and valued letters had not the false knave at whose magic touch the Iona pebbles were to assume a shape in some degree appropriate to the person to whom they are destined, delayd finishing his task. I hope you will set some value upon this little trumpery brooch because it is a harp and a Scotch harp and set with Iona stones. The last circumstance is more

valuable if ancient tales be true than can be ascertained from the reports of dull modern lapidaries. These green stones blessd of St Columbus have a virtue saith old Martin to gratify each of them a single wish of the wearer. I believe that which is most frequently formd by those who gather them upon the shores of the Saint is for a fair wind to transport them from his domains. Now after this you must suppose every thing respecting this said harp mystic and hallowd. The very inscription is you will please to observe in the ancient celtic language and character and has a very talismanic look. I hope that upon you it will have all the effect of a conjuration for the words BHUAIL TEND signify Strike the String. And thus having like the pedlars who deal in like matters of value exhausted all my eloquence upon setting forth the excellent outward qualities and mysterious virtues of my little keepsake I have only to add in homely phrase God give you joy to wear it.

I am delighted with the account of your sylvan empire in Glostershire. The planting and cultivation of trees always seemd to me the most interesting occupation of the country. I cannot enter into the spirit of common vulgar farming though I am doomd to carry on in a small extent that losing trade. It never occurd to me to be a bit more happy because my turnips were better than my neighbours and as for *grieving* my sharers [?] as we very emphatically term it in Scotland I am always too happy to get out of the way that I may hear them laughing at a distance when on the *twist rigg*.

So every servant takes his course
And bad at first they all grow worse.

I mean for the purposes of agriculture for my hind shall kill a salmon and my plough-boy find a hare sitting with any man in the forest. But planting and pruning trees I could work at from morning till night and if my poetical revenues enable me to have a few acres of my own that is one of the principal pleasures I look forward to. There

is too a sort of self-congratulation a little tickling self-flattery in the idea that while you are pleasing and amusing yourself you are really seriously contributing to the future welfare of the country and that your very acorn may send its ribs of oak [*sic*] to future victories like Trafalgar.

You have now by my calculation abandond your extensive domains and retired to your Hampstead villa which at this season of the year though the lesser will prove from your neighbourhood to good society the more comfortable habitation of the two.

Dr. Baillies cares are transferd (I fear for some time) to a charge still more important than the poor princess. I trust in God his skill and that of his brethren may be of advantage to the poor King, for a regency from its unsettled and uncertain tenure must in every country but especially where parties run so high be a lamentable business. I wonder that the consequences which have taken place had not occurd sooner during the long and trying state of suspense in which his mind must have been held by the protracted lingering state of a beloved child.

Your country neighbours interest me excessively. I was delighted with the man that rememberd me though he had forgot Sancho Panza I am afraid my predominance in his memory will not remain much longer than the worthy squires government at Barataria. Meanwhile the lady of the lake is likely to come to preferment in an unexpected manner for two persons of no less eminence than Messrs. Morton and Reynolds play-carpenters in ordinary to Covent Garden are employd in scrubbing carmining [?] and cutting her down into one of those new fashiond sloops calld a Melo drama to be launchd at the theatre and my friend Mr. H. Siddons emulous of such a noble design is at work on the same job here. It puts me in mind of the observation with which our parish smith accompanied his answer to an enquiry whom he had heard preach on Sunday—"Mr. such a one—O Sir he made a *neat work*" thinking doubtless of turning off

a horse-shoe handsomely. I think my worthy artizans will make neat work too before they have done with my unlucky materials. But as Durandarte says in the cavern [?] of Montesinos "Patience cousin and shuffle [*sic*] the cards"—I was obliged to express my satisfaction and so forth for our friend N. Longman wrote me a civil letter and what could I say. Not but entre nous I wishd them at the bottom of Loch Katrine with all my heart.

Jeffrey *was* the author of the critique in the Edinburgh. He sent it to me in the sheet with an apology for some things in that of Marmion which he said containd needless asperities. And indeed whatever I may think of the justice of some part of his criticism I think his general tone is much softend in my behalf.

You say nothing about the Drama on Fear for which you have chosen so admirable a subject and which I think will be in your own most powerful manner. I hope you will have an eye to its being actually represented. Perhaps of all passions it is the most universally interesting for although most part of an audience may have been in love once in their lives and many engaged in the pursuits of ambition and some perhaps have fosterd deadly Hate yet there will always be many in each case who cannot judge of the operations of these motives from personal experience whereas I will bet my life there is not a soul of them but has felt the impulse of Fear were it but as the old tale goes at snuffing a candle with his fingers. I believe I should have been able to communicate some personal anecdotes on the subject had I been able to accomplish a plan I have had much at heart this summer namely to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry men in Portugal. But I found the idea gave Mrs. Scott more distress than I was entitled to do for the mere gratification of my own curiosity. Not that there would have been any great danger for I could easily as a Non-combattant have kept out of the way of the "grinning honour of my namesake Sir Walter Blunt" and I

think I should have been overpaid for a little hardship and risque by the novelty of the scene. I could have got very good recommendation to Lord Wellington and I dare say I should have pickd up some very curious materials for battle scenery. A friend of mine made this very expedition and arrived at Oporto when our army was in retreat from the frontier. He was told of the difficulty and danger he might encounter in crossing the country to the Southward so as to join them on their march nevertheless he travelld on through a country totally deserted unless when he met bands of fugitive peasantry flying they scarce knew whither or the yet wilder groups of the Ordenanza or (levy en mass [*sic*]) who fired with revenge or desire of plunder had armd themselves to harass the French detachd parties. At length in a low glen he heard with feelings that may be easily conceived the distant sound of the Highland bagpipe playing the Garb of old Gaul and fell into the quarters of a Scotch regim. where he was most courteously received by his countryman who assured "his honour he was just come in time to see the pattle." Accordingly being a young man of spirit and a Volunterer Sharpshooter he got a rifle joind the light corps and next day witnessd the Battle of Busaco ; of which he describes the carnage as being terrible. His narrative was very simply told and conveyd better than any I have seen the impressions which such scenes are likely to make where they have the effect (I had almost said the charm) of novelty. I dont know why it is I never found a soldier could give me an idea of a battle. I believe their mind is too much upon the *tactique* to regard the picturesque ; just as we lawyers care very little for an eloquent speech at the bar if it does not shew good doctrine. The technical phrases of the military art too are unfavourable to convey a description of the concomitant terror and desolation that attends an engagement. But enough of this bald disjointed chat.

I have slender hope of getting to London this spring having no business there and finding the expence heavy unless that were the case. Assuredly one of the highest pleasures I should propose to myself would be that of visiting Hampstead frequently, and if possible spurring you on to the discharge of your bounden duty to the public.

Neither Mr. Ballantyne nor I have heard of Mr. Henderson which causes much speculation. Charlotte joins me in kindest compliments to Miss A. Baillie to the Doctor and his Lady and to Mnr Hunter when you meet. I fancy you see Dr. Baillie but seldom at present ; his occupation is a truly melancholy one.¹ Remember me very kindly to your neighbour Mr. Coxe and believe me my dear Miss Baillie Ever your faithful and obliged friend

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 23 *Novr* 1810

[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR,—I should be very ungrateful did I delay to acquaint you that your Manuscript is safe in my hands. I sent it to Edinburgh upon receiving it after a very slight glance at its contents, & it remained with the Messrs Ballantynes until I came here with my family for the winter a very short while ago. Since I have recovered it, I have gone through it more attentively, and am certainly of opinion it contains a great deal which does much honor to its author. At the same time your verses are like all others obnoxious to some criticism, a sound more appalling to an unpractised author than to a Veteran who has stood the fire of at least forty reviews—The *Vol* appears to me (generally speaking) to exhibit

¹ Dr. Matthew Baillie, as physician extraordinary to the King, was probably attending George III, who had shown signs of mental derangement in October.

much feeling sensibility and power of expression and is perhaps deficient in some of the more gaudy and dashing requisites which at present attract immediate and extensive popularity. I should be particularly happy to have the pleasure of seeing you in Scotland of which your letter gives me some hopes and make it my study to shew myself in some degree grateful for the kind and flattering opinion you entertain of me. The slender judgement, or rather feeling with regard to poetical effect which I can pretend to, shall at least be at your service with a sincerity which may compensate for its want of more valuable qualities. I do really think that altho' the publication of your Manuscript should be postponed for a season, it would not be an unfavourable circumstance, for the present momentous state of public affairs is arresting the attention of every one, and I have seldom seen a more dull publishing season. Would you have any objection to the selection of a small piece for the Edinburgh Annual Register a work of uncommon merit which I take a great interest in, as I make sufficiently obvious by hazarding such a request? It is often of importance to have ones name a little known before publishing miscellaneous poetry. The first things I published went to paper bandboxes. My best thanks attend you for the trouble you have taken in behalf of Swift *my Swift* I mean. The corrected copy of his letter to Dean Brandreth is a great treasure. Poor Lady Betty Germain ! I am sorry she was one of the wicked as she seems to have been one of the most sensible of Swifts correspondents and always gives her opinion manfully (if that is a fair expression) when she deemed him under guidance of prejudice. I should have long since endeavoured to make my way to Mr. Theophilus Swift¹ the respected descendant of my mighty theme but I was given to understand (perhaps incorrectly) that he in-

¹ Hartstonge had told Scott in a letter, referred to above, that "Theophilus Swift, Esq, the descendant of the illustrious Dean," had in his possession a seal given by Queen Anne to Swift.

tended a publication himself upon the subject of the Deans life and I could not be so indelicate as to ask him for materials if that were the case as he will doubtless chuse to reserve them for his own use. Mr. Nichols in a passage which has been deservedly exposed by Mr. Monk Berkely¹ in his literary Reliques has adopted a strange absurd tale of Swift having been obliged to leave his living at Kilroot on account of his having attempted a rape on a farmers daughter: that he was examined before a Justice Dobbs of that neighbourhood and that the descendants of the worthy Magistrate were *said* to be of the examinations—what could possibly give rise to this strange hallucination? Rapes were not at all in the Deans way at any time of his life when it was better known and Mr. Berkely very satisfactorily confutes the report by opposing to it Swifts noted ballad on a rape² said to have been attempted by the Dean of Ferns, which he would hardly have indited had he himself been under a similar stigma—any assistance which you can favour me with on the part of Swift, will be acknowledged with sincere gratitude. The worthy and revd Mr. B— has been very kind and liberal in his communications, so I hope thus befriended to make somewhat of a very daring attempt. Your kind letter craved a much earlier acknowledgement but it could only have been a line to say I would secure the manuscript on getting to Edinburgh and I wished to burthen you with all my [*word dropped in copy*] at once. I am dear Sir Your much obliged and humble servt

EDINBURGH 1st Dec 1810.

W. S.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ George Monck Berkeley's *Literary Relics: containing original letters from King Charles II., King James II., the Queen of Bohemia, Swift, etc. To which is prefixed, an inquiry into the life of Dean Swift.* 8vo. London, 1789.

² In replying on the 22nd December Hartstonge thanks Scott for his criticism and leaves to him to choose a poem for the *Register*. He reports a long conversation with Theophilus Swift regarding the story of the rape and the wish of Theophilus that Scott would open a literary correspondence.

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,—I have returnd your packet with Cromeks additional sweepings In his Nithsdale &c sketches he has I think had the assistance of a Mr. Mounsey Cunningham that used to correspond with Mr. Constables Scottish Magazine under the signature T. M. C.¹ I wish you would learn how this stands for he is a man of some genius and I would like to treat him civilly whereas Cromek is a perfect Brain-sucker living upon the labours of others—I have just got Kehama & I hope to have it ready for the Review² so I wish you would keep a corner. I shall be puzzled to do justice to the review in noticing its great blemishes & to the author in pointing out its numerous brilliancies but I must do the best I can. I had Webers Romances in hand but I have laid them aside for this more pressing & more interesting matter—I think I will certainly make a small article of Cromek perhaps with the assistance of a friend.—Gifford remitted me in his last letter two notes of yours which had I see from the dates lain with him some time. This led me into the mistake of drawing on you for the newspapers accompt, not that I would not have used the same freedom at any rate. But I beg you will keep my remittances till the end

¹ Robert Hartley Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song, etc.* 8vo. Cadell and Davis : London, 1810.

Thomas Mounsey Cunningham (1776-1834) was an elder brother of Allan Cunningham. At an early age he began to write poetry, and in 1797 published "The Har'st Kirn" (Harvest Home). While living near Cambridge he wrote "The Hills o' Gallowa'," one of his most popular songs, which was attributed by some to Burns. It appeared later (1820) in a collected edition of his works published by Orphoot at Edinburgh. In 1806 he became a contributor to *The Scots Magazine*, and in 1809 was asked by Hogg, who described him as "Nithsdale's lost and darling Cunningham," to contribute to his *Forest Minstrel*. When *The Edinburgh Magazine* was established in 1817 he contributed prose sketches, under the title of "A Literary Legacy," as well as poems and songs. He became so discouraged that he destroyed all his manuscripts, including a long poem, "Braken Fell." His verse is chiefly concerned with peasant life.

² Scott's review of *Kehama* appeared in the February 1811 number of the *Quarterly*.

of the year & shall write so to Mr. Gifford. It is sometimes convenient to have credit for a few guineas in London. Believe me that as I have not had any cause whatever so I have not had the least intention to slacken our correspondence but the dullness of the literary world at least in these articles of lighter calibre in which I deal gave me but little to say. I have sent Gifford the Petrarch but with an earnest request it may not be used without much modification. It would I find be very disagreeable in its present shape to Lord W. I will undertake to fill the gap in the course of this week by a neat thing on Kehama. Pray let Mr. G. know my change of intention for I wrote to him I understood Kehama was not published—but I have since procured a copy. I remain Dear Sir yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 3 Dec. 1810

Mr. John Murray, Bookseller
Fleet Street London

[*John Murray*]

TO MISS SMITH

EDINBURGH, 18th December 1810

I HASTEN, my dear Miss Smith, to your inquiries about the *Lady of the Lake* in its dramatised form. That Mr. Siddons is bringing it out is very certain, but it is equally so that I have not seen and do not intend to see a line of it, because I would not willingly have the public of this place suppose that I was in any degree responsible for the success of the piece ; it would be like submitting to be twice tried for the same offence. My utmost knowledge has been derived from chatting with Mr. Siddons and Mrs. Young in the green-room, where I have been an occasional lounge since our company has been put on a respectable footing. They have got some clever scenery, from studies taken at Loch Katrine

by Williams, their painter, who is a very good artist and went there on purpose. But whether the dialogue is in verse or prose I really do not know. There is a *third Lady of the Lake* on the *tapis* at Covent Garden, dramatised by no less genius than the united force of Reynolds and Morton. But though I have three theatrical grandchildren as I may call them, I have seen none of them. I shall go to the Edinburgh piece when it is rehearsed with lights and scenes, and if I see anything that I think worth your adoption I will write to you. The strength will probably lie in the dumb-show, music, and decorations, for I have no idea that the language can be rendered very dramatic.¹ If any person can make aught of it, I am sure you will. The mad Lowland captive if well played should I think answer. I wish I could give you an idea of the original, whom I really saw in the Pass of Glencoe many years ago. It is one of the wildest and most tremendous passes in the Highlands, winding through huge masses of rock without a pile of verdure, and between mountains that seem rent asunder by an earthquake. This poor woman had placed herself in the wildest attitude imaginable upon the very top of one of these huge fragments ; she had scarce any covering but a tattered plaid, which left her arms, legs, and neck bare to the weather. Her long shaggy black hair was streaming backwards in the wind, and exposed a face rather wild and wasted than ugly, and bearing a very peculiar expression of frenzy. She had a handful of eagles' feathers in her hand. As she spoke no English,

¹ The first of the three dramatised versions of *The Lady of the Lake* was written by Edmund John Eyre at the request of Henry Siddons. It was produced in Edinburgh on 15th January 1811. "The scenery was announced as being prepared from views taken on the spot." Scott's language was deformed into "an extraordinary kind of blank verse." This was soon followed by Tom Dibdin's version. Then came the one by Morton and Reynolds. But, in addition, Siddons brought out on 18th March yet another version, *The Knight of Snowdown*, a musical drama in three acts, by the elder Morton. The music by Bishop included the famous "Tramp" Chorus.

I no Gaelic, we could have no communication, but I learned at the next resting-place that she used to wander among the rocks for whole weeks during the summer, and was only driven back to society by the inclemency of the weather ; of her story, which might be sad enough, I could learn nothing. The lady who plays this part should beware of singing with too stiff regularity ; even her music or rather her style of singing it, should be a little mad.

Joanna Baillie (for who ever heard of *Miss Sappho*) wrote to me that some of her friends had seen the Surrey piece and censured severely the following circumstance : the King led Ellen the whole length of the stage and took his place upon a throne at the bottom in the discovery scene. This she said was discourteous, and therefore out of character. If you think so too, it can be easily corrected.

I wish I could direct you about the plaid ; but you had better take the prettiest according to your own taste, for the Douglasses being a Lowland family had no particular colour of tartan. I rather wish I could show you how to put it on, for it is a great art, and when done prettily is very becoming. I can only describe it by negatives. It is not like a Highland serjeant's, nor is it *scarf-wise* like a shepherdess in an opera ; but as I have no opportunity of "rowing you in your plaidie" I shall only puzzle you by an attempt to describe it. The plaid is fastened by a brooch, which should be large and showy. The chaussure should be buskins of deer-skin ; this applies to the Highland men also. Douglas, the King, and other personages should be dressed in the old English fashion from which the Scottish dress differed but little. All caps or bonnets, no hats. The bonnet should not be overlaid with feathers, a single plume distinguished the Dunnie-wassell or gentleman, when I first remember the Highlands, from the peasant.

These little trumpery notices are all that occur to me. Doubtless were I with you, I would, in my anxiety that

you should shine where I am at all concerned, plague you enough about costume. If anything should occur in which I can be useful, pray, my dear Miss Smith, command, and show as much of this letter to Mr. C. as you think can be of use to him. A good Christmas and all kinds of success to you,

WALTER SCOTT

P.S.—I shall be anxious to hear how you succeed.

[*Familiar Letters and Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

22nd December 1810

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—We are dying here for political news even like shell-fish at the ebb of the tide and you my dear friend who soar above us like an osprey and see all the changes of the atmosphere at a distance have not the charity to drop me a single line to make me wiser than my fellows. I am however in the happy state of one who has nothing either to hope or fear from the change I apprehend unless as far as it affects my friends or the country at large. An administration who may dislike me can fortunately take nothing from me and my friends who are now in power have never seemed much disposed to befriend me effectually. I only hope I shall not go out poorer than when I came in for my accompts in the business of the Scottish judicature commission have not been passed in the treasury for want of the sign manual of the king. There is a balance of nearly £1000, due to me chiefly money out of my own pocket—however as all my accompts have been carefully examined & passed by the Commissioners under whom I acted I imagine no Administration will decline a settlement though an unfriendly one may postpone payment of the balance. I trust to Robert Dundas's tried friendship for getting me out of the scrape so soon as possible.

We have a report here that *our* Marquis is to be Lord

Chamberlain at which I should greatly rejoice if I could hope that there was foundation for it. I am sure they will be much obliged to him if he shall be disposed to take such a troublesome office. Should this fortunately be the case I shall have a suit to his Lordship on the score of the Edinr theatre ; having been foolish enough to consent to be a trustee for the public along with my Lord Chief Baron the Ld. Advocate Solicitor and some other of our first people here. A dispute has unfortunately arisen about the patent which has involved Messrs. the Trustees who had no other interest in the matter than the pleasure of serving the public in great plague and vexation.¹—*If* such an appointment should take place it would be very kind in you my dear Lady to let me know *early* that I may solicit an audience on this troublesome business with which if I had known as much of theatrical matters two years ago as I do now I would never have troubled myself upon any account.

I am afraid you would scold me if I told you how idle I have been since writing to your Ladyship and therefore I will keep my secret. They are busy dramatizing the Lady of the Lake *here* and in Dublin and in Covent Garden. I carefully avoid making inquiries lest it should be expected that I should give any assistance and I would not willingly give the public a pretext for supposing that I intended introducing [intruding ?] myself on them in another shape—it would be like being twice tried for the same offence ; so I content myself with instructing Mrs. Henry Siddons who is a very pleasant as well as a very amiable person how she should put on or as we may say *busk* her highland plaid. Her husband a very worthy and honourable man but with very little of his mother's genius is our manager here and I fear likely to be hurt with this foolish embroilment of the patent which makes me more anxious about it than I should otherwise be.

¹ For an outline of this incident see note to letter to James Ballantyne, 22nd April [1808], p. 46.

I hope you got your own copy of the *Lady of the Lake* safe in, perhaps like other Ladies she was so late in paying her respects that she did not deserve to have her call acknowledged.

We are going to set forward in the middle of a snow-storm I fear to keep an old hereditary engagement of eating our turkey and cheese with my friend and chief Mr. Scott of Harden on Xmas Day. Two days ago we had a dreadful accident on the coast—two frigates lost by bad pilotage. They mistook the light of a lime-kiln for the beacon of the Isle of May and ran straight ashore fortunately almost all the crews were saved.—Yours ever truly and respectfully,

W. S.

All good wishes of the season attend you the M. & the Ladies. I beg to be remembered to Ld. Hamilton if with you just now.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

MERTOUN HOUSE 29th December [1810]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I was favoured with your kind letter during my residence here where by an old hereditary engagement I always spend my Xmas. I have not got my own Kehama: I had not received it when I left Edinr. but I had borrowed one from Jo: Ballantyne for behoof of the Quarterly and run off a critique at full speed to overtake this No: I have not had a word from Gifford on the subject and unless that I had set my heart on out-stripping the Edinr. I should be glad to find I had another opportunity of revising my paper as I sent off the sheets by post as fast as I could write them. In some points we may disagree of course but I trust you will give me credit for the good will with which I have set myself to battle the *cant* which is commonly used in criticizing a poem of an uncommon and original plan. I hope Gifford will spare my quotations which are

essentially necessary to vindicate the opinions I have expressed.

Much of Kehama is I think quite unequall'd since the days of Milton, nor does your Indian Hall fall at all short of his grand dungeon of fire. In some respects I think you have followed your mythology a little too closely into its more fantastic recesses, but if there be any excess in this, it is completely atoned by the numerous sublime & interesting scenes which you have derived from it. But I will say no more on this subject because I have thrown my notions together without fear or favour just as they arose in my mind under the vivid impression of a third perusal. I have written to Ballantyne to make enquiry about the missing volumes of Somers which must lay somewhere between the Coach proprietors & him. With respect to Mr. Dubois of whom I never heard before & his Monthly Mirror which I only know by name, why if he be capable of playing such a dirty trick he is a dirty rascal and there let him stick in a mire of his own making. When I resigned a profession in which I had some chance of preferment to adopt a life more favourable for literature I did not put my hand to the plough without seriously examining whether I felt strength of mind to avoid the two shoals on which literary men have frequently wreck'd their peace and even their character. Envy of superior talents I thank God is unknown to my disposition and truly to vex oneself on account of those who chuse to plant themselves à mon regard in the scorers chair would argue little philosophy & less common sense. I beg you will make my thanks acceptable to Mr. Coleridge for his very handsome & gentlemanlike conduct upon the occasion & I shall be particularly happy when I can proffer them in person.¹

¹ In his letter of 24th December Southey had thrown light on the Coleridge-Scott episode in connection with *The Courier*, already referred to in Scott's letter to Southey (19th-20th September 1810). "I was very glad," Southey said, "to see Coleridges disavowal of that paltry piece of malice

Respecting the *Morte Arthur* I will be delighted to have the benefit of your notes which will be of the last service to me. The only thing which delays my motions is that I am desirous to collate the ordinary edition Stansby with the only *Caxton* known to exist and which belongs to Lady Jersey.¹ If I go to town in Spring it will be chiefly with a view to get this job accomplished & to look at some letters of Swift said to be in Lady Castlereagh's possession.

I dread the unfortunate scuffle which this melancholy interregnum is likely to cause among our politicians. It is precisely of a kind to put the worst & most mischievous effects of party spirit into motion on all sides. Without some miserable blunder or more miserable inactivity the flame which we have so effectually seen kindled in Portugal will extend itself far & wide. Bonaparte can no longer pay his armies with the plunder of his victims & his frantic antipathy to commerce leaves him no resources of revenue except direct taxation which is not unlikely to precipitate his downfall. I understand Lord Wellesley is fortifying the Southern Bank of the

in the *Courier*;—a rascally imposition which he resented more strongly than I thought he could have resented any thing. I have a strong suspicion that it came from a man who spits his frothy venom occasionally both at you & him in the *Monthly Mirror*, & whose name is Dubois—Sir John Carr's antagonist—a man possessed of some classical reading, tho not very deep in that, & a great stock of small wit, but as full of malice & of mischief as he can hold. He brought out two letters of introduction to me at Lisbon, one from a person who did not know him, the other from a person who did not know me. Since that I have met him occasionally at Hill's, the book-collector in Queen Hythe, for whom he edited the *M. Mirror*, any number of which shows of what stuff he is made. Hill sends me this *Magazine*, & what I have seen there added to my knowledge of Dubois's character made me immediately suspect him of this trick, & subsequent observation has confirmed me in that suspicion. The letter to the *Courier* imposed upon the Editor by the handwriting, which is very curious. It was post-marked Aylesbury—I think—but am not certain that he comes from that part of the country. The thing is scarcely worth a thought, but it vexed me at the time & it is a new species of literary fraud against which no man can be secure." For Edward Dubois (1774-1850), see the *D.N.B.*

¹ Southey had added in a postscript: "Why will you not take up the *Morte Arthur*? I have a few notes upon the subject which are at your service."

Tagus to cover Lisbon from any attempt on that hand & as he, supposing the French force divided on both sides of the river, will have the power of uniting his forces to attack either, they must I think be sure of an immense superiority before they attempt to invest him in that fashion.

James Ballantyne speaks in the highest possible terms of the history of the Register.¹ I have promised him some trifles. I wish he could get something poetical from Mr. Coleridge's pen.

Mrs. Scott sends love to Mrs. Southey & I am ever
Yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

Many happy new years to you—

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

To JOANNA BAILLIE

[MERTOUN, *December 31st*, 1810]

NOTHING my dear Miss Baillie could have given me more pleasure than your setting some value on the trinket which accompanied my last and not a little proud shall I be of its occupying a place in the new gown Charlotte puts in for her share of merit and is not a little delighted that you should have assigned it to her. But when will our mourning be over and our splendour shine forth? Alas I fear not till we have mourned for our poor old King, whose frame I should fear is gradually giving way under this terrible malady. Yet if his recovery should not be speedy and permanent I scarce know how to wish it either for his own sake or that of the country for the unsettled and feeble domination of a Regency will not fail to have its usual effects in setting the worst principles of faction afloat and dividing the country between those who profess to stand up for the

¹ The history of the year, written by Southey.

father and those who adhere to the son and that at a moment when all the united talents of our best politicians and the continued and unanimous efforts of our whole nation would not be more than enough to ensure the safety of the commonwealth. I am truly happy that the prince has behaved with decorum and moderation. Any appearance of pressing forward into power at such a juncture would imply a great unworthiness to possess it. Even amid these tragic considerations it is impossible to preserve gravity at the frisks and frolics of our northern *Mecænas* Sir John Sinclair Bart. It is actually like the Punch of the puppetshew who intrudes himself into every scene grave or tragic whether it represents King Solomon in all his glory or the Universal Deluge. To show you how essentially necessary this wise-acre thinks it that he should have a finger in every man's pie, he wrote me the other day a long letter laying down rules for a poem to be called the *Lady of the Sea* and which was to turn upon the adventures and intrigues of a *Caithness Mermaiden* with whom he almost promised me an interview. I parried the undertaking by reminding him that he had brought the sea-nymphs so much into the province of natural History that they could no longer be considered as fictitious beings and had therefore ceased to have any title to poetic commemoration.¹ This wise

¹ Besides suggesting this subject for a new poem, Sir John's letter (6th November 1810) contained curious observations of his visit to the Trossachs. "I was fortunate enough to have a very favourable day for visiting the beauties of Loch Catharine, in the fame of which I take a peculiar interest, as it was first brought into notice by the Publication of the Statistical Account of Scotland [of which Sir John was the originator]. . . . An idea accidentally occurred to me, that your next performance should be called *The Mermaid* or '*The Lady of the Sea*.' I have a strong inducement for wishing you to adopt that suggestion, as it would be necessary for you, in order to carry it into effect, to pay a visit to *Caithness*, the coast of which is at present *the favourite haunt* of these Oceanic Nymphs. I should be particularly glad to have the pleasure of seeing you there next summer & of introducing you to some of them, for I have no doubt, when they heard the sound of your Lyre, that they would immediately make their appearance. . . . You have increased the number of visitors to Loch Catharine *beyond measure* ; my carriage was the 297th in the course of this year, and

epistle reminded me of the tragic plan which he was kind enough to lay down for you and which, hard-hearted as you are, you faild to avail yourself of. And that celebrated projet of Darius conducted me to a much more pleasing subject, the Family Legend ; so before I left town for the holidays I made John Ballantyne furnish me with the enclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Henderson which is the second he tells me he has written to him about the Copy money—it will apprize you how that matter stands and you have only to

 speak your wishes speak your will
 Swift obedience meets them still.

As for the Metamorphosis of the Lady of the Lake into Drama or rather into three Dramas for the same adventure is to be tried at Dublin London and Edinburgh I would not willingly have you believe either that I affect or possess stoicism enough to be insensible to the applauses of a crouded theatre. On the contrary I think that of all kinds of popular plaudits this is the manner in which an author has his most ample satisfactory and perhaps intoxicating draught of success. But I shall have no more honour supposing any of these attempts successful than the cook who roasted a turkey yesterday has for the capo-rotta (I think house-wives call it so) which a sister of the trade has presented us with to-day out of the reliques of the feast. Besides I cannot think with much patience on such persons as Reynolds and Morton garbling my unfortunate verses and turning that into dramatic dialogue which is but well enough as it stands in minstrel verse—and therefore once more do I wish the whole affair at the bottom of Loch Katrine nor do I care if they

there never had been above 100 before in any one season when its fame rested solely on prosaic eulogiums ; so that the effect of praise in verse compared to praise in prose is as 3 to 1. That leads me to think of one strong objection to your writing *The Mermaid* ; namely, that your giving a splendid description of that singular race, their beauty, their habitations, their mode of living &c will dispose multitudes to pant for visiting such scenes, & perhaps numbers will thence be induced to throw themselves into the sea, to enjoy such supreme felicity.”—*Walpole Collection*.

carried the whole race of Melo-drama along with them provided the stage were left open for the tragedies of a certain fair lady who does not know her own merit or believe what her friends tell her on that point.

I certainly agree with you on the general point that there is a better chance of plays succeeding after action than after their first appearance in print. The theatrical effect has in the latter case that fair play which it cannot have in the former [*sic*].¹ But I still think your pieces must and will obtain possession of the stage while you can yet watch their progress and observe the impression they make upon the audience. The present wretched taste for dramatic composition is indeed so interwoven with the miserable monopoly granted to the two theatres that many obstacles must arise to the revival of true tragic taste. When a theatre is built on a scale large enough to hold one half of the common play-going folks it must of course be too large either for expression or action and I suppose the large boots and masques of the ancient stage must speedily be resorted to. But this is too artificial and absurd an order of things to subsist for ever and depend upon it that whenever small theatres (I mean moderate sized theatres) are again in request the taste for legitimate tragedy will revive on its proper field and I shall live to hold up your tragic pall by an Epilogue or clear the way for you by a prologue. Meantime I shall wait with anxiety the promised volume—perhaps I may have a Pisgah sight of it when I come to Hampstead in spring which in the event of my coming to London is one of the most pleasant objects I have in view.

If there be anything incoherent in this letter pray ascribe it to my writing in the neighbourhood of a ball, for all the little Scotts of Harden with the greater part of my own are dancing in the new year in . . .

[*The letter breaks off here—evidently a second sheet is missing*]

[*Familiar Letters and Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

¹ “Latter” “former”: should be here reversed.

TO REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN

MERTOUN HOUSE, 30 Dec. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—It was very late this season before I got to Edinburgh, and consequently before I had the pleasure of receiving your valued present, on which I have been making my Christmas cheer ever since, until an ancient and hereditary engagement brought me here to spend the holidays with my chief, the Laird of Harden. I should be very ungrateful indeed, if I longer delayed the acknowledgment of the pleasure I have received from the re-perusal of the “Local Attachment,” and the “Old English Gentleman ;” which, I take great credit to my taste in boasting, have been long favourites of mine, as well as from reading the other curious and interesting volumes with which I had yet to form an acquaintance. I have never had the good fortune to see topographical labours conducted at once with the accuracy of the antiquary and the elegance of the man of general literature, until you were so kind as to send me your county histories ; which, under a title not very inviting beyond the bounds of the provinces described, contain so much interesting to the general reader, and essential to the purpose of the English historian. You have furnished a folio and an octavo shelf in my little bookroom, with treasures which I shall often resort to with double pleasure, as pledges of the kindness of the ingenious author.¹

I wrote to Gifford about three weeks ago, mentioning my wish to take up the “Local Attachment.” But he answers me that the present number is filled up ; and in case he does not make room for me in the next, I must seek another corner for my critique, and I have cast my

¹ The volumes Polwhele had sent were duly listed in his letter of 29th October, to which this letter is a reply. They were : *Poems* in three pocket volumes ; *Sketches in Verse* ; *The Unsexed Females* ; *Grecian Prospects* ; *The Local Attachment* ; *The Old English Gentleman* ; *Theocritus* in 2 vols. ; *Historical Views of Devon* ; *History of Cornwall* in 6 vols. ; and *The History of Devonshire*.

eyes upon the Edinburgh Annual Register, but I will wait to see what our Generalissimo says about his next number. I shall not be sorry if he still declines my criticism, because I think I can weave it into a tolerably independent article, for the Register aforesaid.

Our "Northern Antiquities,"¹ as we have ventured to christen a quarto undertaken by Mr. Weber and Mr. R. Jamieson, both friends of mine, are to contain a great deal of Teutonic lore. Much of the first volume is occupied by an account, rather protracted I fear, of the *Heldenbuch*, a series of romances, referring to the history of Attila and Theodoric, and therefore very curious. Theodoric was to the Germans what King Arthur was to the English, and Charlemagne to the French Romancers—a leading King and champion, who assembled at his court a body of chivalrous Knights, whose various adventures furnish the theme of the various cantos of this very curious work.

This is executed by Henry Weber, who is chin-deep² in all that respects Teutonic poetry, and it is perfectly new to the English Antiquary. Jamieson gives some translations from the *Kiempe Viser*, a collection of Heroic Ballads, published in Denmark, about the end of the sixteenth century. Their curiosity consists in a great measure in the curious relation they bear to the popular ballads of England and Scotland. Then I have promised to translate some Swiss war songs and other scraps of poetry. In short our plan is entirely miscellaneous, and embraces anything curious that is allied to the study of history, or more particularly to that of poetry. This is

¹ *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances; Being an Abstract of the Book of Heroes and Nibelungen Lay with translations of Metrical Tales from the Old German, Danish, and Icelandic Languages with Notes and Dissertations.* Edinburgh . . . 1814. The *Heldenbuch* is followed by *Popular Heroic and Romantic Ballads from Northern Languages* by R. Jamieson. The only contribution by W. S. is an Abstract of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*.

² So Polwhele's *Traditions and Recollections*, ii. 639; "skin-deep," *Letters*, etc., 1832.

our plan, my good friend, and if you have any thing lying by you which you would intrust to this motley caravan, we will be much honoured. But I hope soon to send you the first volume, when you will judge how far we deserve your countenance. I will take care you have it so soon as published, and perhaps you may like to review it for the Quarterly. I have little share in it, excepting my wish to promote the interest of the prime conductors, whose knowledge is rather more extensive than their financial resources.

I am very glad to hear that Drs. Collins and Carlyon are well, and settled in their native country. Though I have little chance of ever meeting them again, I cannot easily forget the agreeable hours their society afforded me at our chance meeting on the hills of Selkirkshire.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with the best wishes of this season, your obliged and grateful humble servant,

JOOT BALK

WALTON SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

TO ROBERT SURTEES OF MAINSFORTH

MY DEAR SURTEES,—If I were not the most ungrateful creature on earth I should have jogged your memory long ago only I really had some salve for my conscience by supposing you were in my debt: but not to waste further time in trifling apologies I proceed to business methodically.

Ten thousand thanks for the beautiful invocation.¹ Will you permit it for my honour & glory as well as your own to see the light in the Edinr. Annual Register which we are trying with good success to make a crack thing of. The verses will be very much admired here, & they speak flattery to too many of my prejudices for me (if it rested with me) to suffer them to remain entombed in MS. You must grant me this & you would grant it if you knew it is a request wh: I wd not make to many people where my own useless name was concerned. But I shd. like to be pricked on to say something about poor Charley.

My friend Weber does not publish by subscriptn. but

¹ In a letter of the 31st December Surtees writes: "You have never attended to my request in prose, and therefore, on the other side, you will find an incantation to induce you to write *La très piteuse et délectable histoire du preux et errant Chevalier, Charles Stuart.*" The incantation is the verses to Scott on his having at the end of *The Lady of the Lake* bid farewell to the "Harp of the North."—Surtees *Memoir*, pp. 108-9. It was printed in the *Annual Register* for 1810 (published 1812). The third stanza runs:

Yet once again the magic lyre shall ring;
An exiled prince demands the lofty strain,
And Scotland's falchion drawn to fence her king,
And clans embattled on her native plain;
The Stuart's heir demands his father's reign, &c.

Not in a poem but in *Waverley* the wish was answered three years later.

Surtees then asks a number of questions which Scott here answers *seriatim*.

perhaps he may have a copy of the Romances to dispose of. I will learn before this letter goes off.

I can fortunately send you a neat Edition of Godscroft¹ Ex dono. It now rarely occurs & as I have the original folio Edition it does not in any way rob my shelves. There is as far as I can judge no difference except in rarity between the Editns. 1644 & 1743. I think I can pick up a Pittscottie for about 10s or at 15 shillings. It used to sell (the last Edition) for 4s or 5s. It was miserably edited from a MS in our library & cruelly modernized. When you want any nice quotation you shall have it ex fonte if you will let me know.

As to St. Cuthbert I must have a little time to look after my authorities. Ritson always insisted that Bp Thurstan was not at the battle but lying sick at York while it was fought. I will endeavour to detect his authority. The great historian of the war as you doubtless well know is Ailred de Bello Standardi. I always thought it an unkind trick of St. Cuthbert to bestir himself so lustily against his countrymen & I shall be rejoiced to find he was incapable of it. There is a rude draught of the Standard in Ailred (apud Twisden) but that you have of course consulted. After all I shall not be at all surprised to find that the passage in Marmion has been hastily expressed from some general recollection of the story connected with the place where the battle was fought.—I am delighted to hear that you are proceeding with the County history from which I expect great pleasure.

I have been giving the Register aforesaid a few words descriptive of a small MS. book of poems² in my possession written out very neatly “in obedience to Mrs Tomkins commands” by the Author Patr: Carey in 1651. The

¹ i.e. David Hume of Godscroft's *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*, fol., Edin., 1644. See Introduction and Appendix No. I to *Castle Dangerous*.

² Presented to Scott by John Murray. See account of the poems of Patrick Carey, a poet of the seventeenth century, in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1810 (published 1812).

poems are amatory religious & political & are really far from wanting merit. Have you ever heard of such a person? There is a shield on the title page with a cross anchoree or as I think the English Heralds call it a cross moline. Beneath the motto is a red rose & a date of time & place Warnifurd 1651.

To interest you in my friend Patrick Carey you are to understand that he was a suffering loyalist a gallant Cavalier in short a second Colonel Lovelace. So perhaps your knowledge of heraldry can help me to a probable guess at his family. There is no colouring on the shield.

I wish we could get up a few anecdotes of poor Ritson for I saw some that were intended for publication neither creditable nor correct & a fellow called [*name torn out of copy*]¹ has published an unfeeling acct. of the last melancholy scenes of the poor antiquary's life.

I send Godscroft by this day's mail to be left at Rushyford. I hope you duly receive Somers. The IV Vol: my friend Jo: Ballantyne says was duly forwarded by the mail; but they are sometimes incorrect in delivering parcels on the road. Mrs. Scott joins in kind remembrances & all good new-year wishes to Mrs. Surtees. Do you never think of making our Northern Athens a visit during this bleak season? We should be rejoiced to see you. Your truly obliged

W. SCOTT.

EDINR. 4th Janry. 1811.

I find Mr. Weber has no copy of the Romances for himself. Pray what has become of your Pensioner for whom I subscribed & how shall I pay the money?

I never heard exactly your story of the Dean & Chapter but it somewhat resembles a feat of the late mad Earl of Roseberry who invited the presbytery of Mid Lothian to dine with him—set down an excellent dinner wh: he told them was an emblem of their good qualities as individuals—he then flung the contents of every dish upon the table

¹ In Surtees *Memoir* the name ending is *uck*.

into a large tub & commanded them to feed out of it the mass thus formed being he said a just emblem of them as a collective church court.

[*Abbotsford Copies and Surtees Memoir*]

TO MRS. SCOTT, MERTOUN HOUSE, ST. BOSWELLS

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—Amidst the confusion of preparation for Twelfth night Charlotte deputed me to answer your kind enquiries after our journey which was very tolerable snow & sickness considered. Anne was sick the whole way but caught no cold and was very well next morning. The snow was a means of delay but no serious obstacle excepting at the top of Soutra where it was drifted for a little way. Our little people return the warmest recollection of the hospitalities of Mertoun and of the kindness of their young friends. We too are delighted to find that even a long visit (so trying in many respects) has not been too much for the patience of our valued friends.

We cannot find that we have left a music book & suspect some mistake in that matter.

I have detected Sir John Sinclairs piracy and I add a few lines of the poem in which it occurs as they contain a benediction which may suit Mertoun as well as Mountoun for which they were written. The said Sir John gets a most unmerciful *pounding* in the Quarterly¹—the whips of

¹ An ironical and amusing review of Sir John's Observations on the Report of the Bullion Committee (the burning question of the gold standard or at least some degree of deflation) in the *Quarterly*, November 1810 (issued towards the end of the year). One suspects Scott's own hand. There is more chaff than economics, amusing references to Sinclair's earlier work on Health and Longevity, and his Essay on Mermaids. See p. 419. An ambiguous sentence in a letter of Ellis of 9th January points either to himself or Scott: "I am not sure that there is any *very* dull article in the No. excepting an unintelligible one on trigonometry and perhaps my own review of Huskisson [on currency] for which however I have been able to make some amends (by the aid of *Erasmus aut Diabolus*)—so that there are said to be many people in London and in both our universities who are said to be now laughing at the Right Honble president of the board of agriculture." See also the letter to Morritt of 20th December 1811.

the Edinburgh Review seem to have become scorpions in the hands of their rivals.

Charlotte joins in kindest and best remembrances to Mr. Scott & to the little folks to whom Anne & Sophia send as many greetings as the paper will hold. Believe me dear Mrs. Scott your ever faithful & respectful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 5 *January* 1811

Mountown thou sweet retreat from Dublin cares
Be famous for thy apples & thy pears
For turnips carrots lettuce beans & pease
For Peggys butter & for Peggy's cheese
May clouds of pigeons round about thee fly
But condescend sometimes to make a pye
May fat geese gaggle with melodious voice
And ne'er want gooseberry or apple sauce
Ducks in thy pond & chickens in thy pens
And be thy turkeys numerous as thy hens
May thy black pigs lie warm in little sty
And have no thought to grieve them till they die
Mountown the Muses most delicious theme
O may thy codlins ever swim in cream
Thy rasp and strawberries in Bourdeaux drown
To add a redder tincture to their own
Thy white-wine, sugar, milk, together club
To marke that gentle viand syllabub
Thy tarts to tarts, cheese-cakes to cheese-cakes join
To spoil the relish of the flowing wine
But to the fading palate bring relief
By thy westphalian ham & Belgic beef
And to complete thy blessings in a word
Still be thy soil as friendly as thy lord.

The lines are from a poem in 1704 written by the witty Dr. King¹ call'd the Mully of Mountown. With a few

¹ "Dr. William King, the civilian whose celebrity for self-indulgence is certainly not less than his reputation for wit, presided in the early part of Queen Anne's reign over the Court of Admiralty in Ireland, where he held the office of Vicar-General to the then Primate, and through his verses on Mully of Mountoun, 'A cow sprung from a beautiful race,' is identified

allusions to Dr. Douglas the mince pies and the black teapot I could if my conscience had been as large as Sir Johns have adapted it very neatly to our last weeks festivities.

I think My dear Mrs. Scott you should let our friend Dr. Douglas read the above lines it will give him so much pleasure by reminding him of the good cheer we all enjoyed at Mertoun.¹

[*Polwarth*]

with a well-known residential district on Dublin Bay called Monkstown, within which lies the far-famed Mountown, then the country residence of one of the Irish judges. But Swift's acquaintance with Dr. King was probably due to his employment as editor of the *Examiner* before Swift undertook that office."—*The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, 1690-1712*, edited by F. Elrington Ball, 1910.

¹ These last lines are not in Scott's hand, but apparently that of Lady Scott. So many different Scotts come into the story that it might be well here to enumerate the different families of the name with whom Sir Walter is either related or in constant close intercourse. Besides the Dukes of Buccleuch, of whom he is familiar with three in succession—Duke Henry, (1746-1812); Charles, fourth Duke, whom he had known as Lord Dalkeith and who died in 1819; Walter, in whose education he took a warm interest—there are: (1) Hugh Scott of Harden, whom he regards as the head of his particular branch of the family, for the Scotts of Raeburn, of Gala, and of Sandyknowe were all descended in one line or another from the Walter Scott of Harden known as Auld Watt of Harden. Scott's cousin married in 1795 the daughter of Count Bruhl. With them at Mertoun the Scotts generally spent Christmas. There are many letters from Hugh and his wife to Scott in the *Walpole Collection*. Later he became Lord Polwarth; (2) Walter Scott of Raeburn, married Sir Walter's grand-aunt, Jean Scott of Sandyknowe. For Sir Walter's opinion of this unamiable gentleman see the *Journal*, 23rd May 1830. His son William (Maxpoppie) comes frequently into the correspondence as a rather unfortunate person for whom his father has refused to provide adequately, and for whom Sir Walter makes repeated appeals to the Duke of Buccleuch. On the death of Charles Erskine in 1825 Scott made him Sheriff-Substitute at Selkirk; (3) the Scotts of Gala were another offshoot from the Scotts of Harden. In Scott's letters we hear frequently of John Scott of Gala, who accompanied Sir Walter on his visit to Waterloo and Paris in 1815. These are the principal families of the clan. A Scott of Woll is mentioned in the *Journal* along with Scott of Gala, whether a relation I do not know; and there is also a Scott of Ancrum. Besides these Border families we catch a glimpse of Sir William Scott, Baron Stowell, the maritime and international lawyer, and once Sir Walter writes in a friendly tone to the John Scott who was to be killed in a duel with Christie, fought on the score of Lockhart.

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINR., 11th January 1811

I MUST not my dear Lady Abercorn allow you to remain under your airy delusions as to my good faith.¹ Assuredly your informers have been under the influence of the pneumatic system so ingeniously described by the sapient Mr. Matthews & which for aught I know is the most curious & satisfactory account of the workings of the human mind that the world has been yet favoured with by any metaphysical philosopher. The first hundred lines of the *Lady of the Lake* were written I think in October 1809 and the first canto was sent to your Ladyship in Ireland so soon as it was complete and you were the first who saw them excepting one friend and the printer Mr. Ballantyne who is a great critic as well as an excellent printer. I have been always God help me too poor and too impatient to let my poems lie by me for years or for months either :² on the contrary they have hitherto been always sent to the press before they were a third part finished. This is to be sure a very reprehensible practice in many respects and I hope I shall get the better of it the next time. I assure you *seriously* my dear friend that I am *not* about any new poem and it is needless to add that nobody can have seen that which has no existence. Whenever I do begin any work you shall know it but I hope we shall meet first. When the idea of a new poem has at any time crossed my imagination I foresee great difficulty in the choice of a subject. I have sometimes thought of laying the scene during the great

¹ Lady Abercorn had written : " I am seriously angry with you because you are not sincere with me—I am afraid you are writing again and that some people have seen some of what is done. *I swore* you were not and was laughed at for believing you and to convince me I was not in your confidence I was assured the *Lady of the Lake* had been begun two years before it came out—if this is so I have no longer any dependence on you. . . . I am writing *under the impression of having been deceived* ! . . . Tell me how people hear the Duke of Argyll's marriage, is Ly C. Cam[p]bell still in Scotland?" A Mr. Knight has sent her a suggestion for a poem.

² I have inserted a colon to make the sense clearer.

civil war in 1643. This would have the advantage of some novelty and the characters of the period might be rendered highly poetical. The only thing I have rhymed since *The Lady of the Lake* is translations from some very old Swiss battlesongs for a work called *Northern Antiquities*¹ which is undertaken by two friends of mine who are very learned and very indigent and to whom therefore I am glad to give a little assistance.

I was quite delighted with Mr. Perceval's speech, and indeed with his conduct through all this most unhappy business.² He has risen greatly in the opinion of the Country and with all who stand by the good old distressed Monarch at this crisis will have a more noble reward in his own conscience and in the applause of all good men than any continuation of power could have bestowed. I beg of your friendship dear Lady A to let me know when there is any probability of a favourable change in the King's malady—ill news will come soon enough. The Whig interest here are solemnizing their approaching power by giving parties, etc. somewhat indecent this—the D. of Argyle's marriage was a nine days' wonder and is already forgotten. I saw Lady Charlotte for an hour one evening as she passed through Edinburgh. She is still looking beautiful. We hear she is or was on the eve of marrying Lord Petersham. Don't you think that might be as well let alone?—She has I should think left Scotland now having passed through Edinburgh while I was at Mertoun.

I have sometimes serious thoughts of going to Portugal that is if the war lasts and Lord Wellington is to be supported there. I have described so many battles that I would compound for a moderate degree of risque to see one and I suppose a Non-combatant would be in no great danger and that I could easily get letters to headquarters—But all this is is rather a vision than a scheme.

¹ I cannot find them in the *Northern Antiquities* as published.

² The Regency Bill debates.

Mr. Knight's idea of a poem is an admirable one—
Pray have the goodness to remember me to him and
believe me, with all respectful remembrances to the
Marquis and the family your honoured and obliged,

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

W. S.

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I am delighted to hear of the addition to your family in the person of a young Lord Strabane or whatever his title is to be. The Marquis is I take it for granted more delighted with his new dignity as a Grandfather than any that a court could confer. It is really an important event & I beg you to believe that I share most sincerely in the prolonged view which it opens to all the House of Abercorn. I had the pleasure yesterday to congratulate Miss Alice Gordon, Lord Aberdeen's sister¹ on the happy arrival of the little stranger. She dined with us in company with Lord Chief Baron & Mr. Dundas ; & from the little chat I had with her I think she has a share of her brothers good sense & talent.

Our theatrical matters have been settled by an agreement between the parties principally interested : so thank Heaven there is an end to labour & solicitation on that subject. If any one catches me in the situation of a trustee for the public or a theatrical patentee again I will give them leave to make me candle-snuffer to the play-house for life. Your Lady-ship will also be pleased to hear that the official body I belong to have been very successful in a suit in Exchequer for estimating the compensation to be paid to us. This is now fixed at allowances of £1300, a year to each which considerably increases my reversionary prospects, as the Crown

¹ Lord Aberdeen's wife was Catherine Elizabeth, the eldest surviving daughter of the Marquis of Abercorn by his first wife, Catherine, daughter of Sir John Copley, Bart. She died in February 1812.

Lawyers wished to put us off with £1000—This comes in place of our old system of official fees which though nominally large fell very short from the difficulty of collecting them.

My prospects of getting to town in Spring grow rather more uncertain. I have no prospect of being called up on public business & the expense is serious in any other way. Neither do I think I have much chance of getting to Ireland which I should be so delighted to visit when your Ladyship returns there. But I will endeavour to see you as you pass through Scotland if it be but for a day.

I would willingly hope the P. may have the prudence your Ladyship is disposed to give him credit for.¹ Mais je m'en doute beaucoup. He has a set of very interested persons about him & they must needs go where the D—— drives.

A thousand thanks for your kind remembrance of me among your friends upon this joyful occasion. I assure you it is not thrown away upon me & that I am your honoured & obliged

W. S.

EDINR. 2 *february* 1811

Just as I finished my letter I have one from my colleague in office resigning £200 of the appointments in my favour so I am just so much the richer.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LORD DALKEITH

MY DEAR LORD,—I received the enclosed some days ago and have been prevented by the stormy weather from calling with it at Bowhill. It refers to a subject we formerly discussd being nothing less than the Root of

¹ Lady Abercorn had written : " The King I trust is going on well but his perfect recovery cannot be rapid enough to prevent a Regency, tho I trust it will induce the prince not to change the Administration. He is behaving very well by all I hear," etc,

all Evil moral & political. I can without any personal inconvenience remove any temporary embarrassment but I fear it will be necessary that his Grace or Mr. Don take some opportunity to announce their purpose and wishes upon this matter.

Upon Monday we leave this place with some regret on my part though the migration is not more violent than that of the Vicar of Wakefield & his good wife from the green bed to the brown.

I wishd much to have consulted Lady Dalkeiths taste on a very pretty plan for my cottage but that must now be for Edinburgh or Dalkeith leisure—Ever my dear Lord
Your truly faithful & obliged W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Thursday* [1811]¹

[*Buccleuch*]

*To LADY ABERCORN*²

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—A matter has occurred since I wrote to you in which my future fortunes are so *deeply* implicated that I think you yourself would blame me did I not confide it to your friendly ear & invoke your powerful assistance. It is in short the only opportunity that my friends may ever have to shew me that they really are so ; it is an object reasonable in itself

¹ This letter is undated, but on the 29th January Lord Dalkeith replied : “ As you are so good as to put it to me whether you should sell or make up a complete vote I can have no hesitation in saying that I should much prefer seeing *you* on the roll to any other person.”

² The letters which follow deal mainly with the affair of Scott's accession to the full salary (£1300) of his post as Clerk of Session. Pringle, a chief clerk, had died, and at first Scott hoped he might succeed him, but after swearing that he would not, in hope of something better, David Hume, the philosopher's nephew, took the post. Scott's interest was then to get Home to retire under the provisions of the new Act of Judicature. There were difficulties about this arising chiefly from Home's fear of being exposed to the “ gibes of the Burdetts and Whitbreads and the rest of the democratical vermin.” The letters are printed from the Melville papers in the National Library, where are also most of the letters and documents referred to, a letter of Lady Abercorn to Lord Melville of 24th February, the letters of Home, etc., etc.

& apparently dictated by the very nature of the case ; it is I may venture to say pointed out by the general voice of the public here & warmly seconded by my Lord Mellville. The following is a state of the case with part of which you are already familiar from the uniform & kind interest you have always taken in my affairs. In Spring 1806 when the death of Mr. Pitt dissolved the then administration he left my preferment, (which he had generously thought of, a distinction which as I was not personally known to him I shall cherish as my proudest recollection) a sort of legacy to Lord Mellville thro' his nephew William Dundas. The Dundas family were sufficiently disposed to oblige me from long & uninterrupted friendship which I had enjoyed upon a footing of intimacy with Lord Mellville Lord Chief Baron Robert Dundas & in short their whole family. But the administration was on the point of dissolution & as everyone was glad to swim ashore on a piece of the wreck I was fain to ally myself with Mr. George Home a Clerk of Session who then wished to retire being after thirty years service rendered incapable by Deafness of the most obdurate kind from discharging the duties of his office. Accordingly a Commission was executed to us of the office upon condition that I should do all the duty & Mr. Home draw all the salary during his life. This was in some respects a hard bargain for me but what could I do ? the Whigs would have caressed me if I would apostatize from my political principles & made very flattering advances. But that was out of the question while I had a shilling to buy a crust & a sheeps head for my family. So I e'en resolved to live on expectancy in the mean time & I have laboured in many departments of literature which I confess I think rather beneath me to maintain my family in some of the comforts & elegancies of life. In this way—with the advantage of a Sherifffdom of £300 & the interest of the little fortune I have had left by my father & uncle I have fought my way living within rather

than up to my income & sacrificing both my health & literary reputation to the unremitting & irksome labours of an Editor—while I have the united testimony of all my brethren in office (who would do almost anything for me) that I have conducted myself with more than regular attention to the duties of my unproductive situation. But although in this way I have kept matters even, it is impossible to look forward with hope to so cheerless a prospect & really my spirits though naturally very equal are apt to sink when I look at my little people & think that with my utmost œconomy I can add but little or nothing to the fortune they have derived from others which is very small & that I am on the hope of outliving a man who may outlive me educating them for a rank in society which I may not leave enough to maintain them in—And this while folks are in power on whose account I have incurd [*sic*] a hatred which will never leave me till I am where hatred & favour are equally indifferent. All this my dear Lady Abercorn I think you know already but the recapitulation is at least as necessary as that of the Clergyman from his last Sundays discourse. Now to the application.

Yesterday Mr. Pringle the eldest of our body (exclusive of my immortal friend) was gathered to his fathers, (I had done his business by the way as well as my own for this year past). Now I really think it would be a hardship if they were to nominate anyone to the appointment over my head who have been transacting the business of the court with general & very flattering approbation from the judges for no less than five years without ever receiving a guinea. The only difficulty that occurred to me would be the difficulty of placing any person in the same situation that I am with my venerable friend who sticks to me like Sinbads old man of the Sea. Many people would be willing to take the burden off him & people too whom Lord Mellville would like to oblige. But the reversion Act may I fear stand in the way of any

new appointment in the terms of our joint commission. And though I do not care to be quite throttled by my rider yet I would not throw him off in the mire neither but rather dwell in my necessity than do anything that could be construed as shabby especially as he resigned about a fortnight ago £200 a year granted in Exchequer in my favour.

But surely a man who has served the state like Mr. H. for forty years may now be entitled to retire on 2/3rd of his pension as is the rule with other officers. My having acted under this unreasonable bargain for five years is no reason for continuing [?] it upon or rather the contrary. The difference I could easily settle by private arrangement so that the old gentleman should be no loser. He is himself wealthy & when he succeeds to a maiden aunt who keeps his house will be worth at least fifteen thousand a year without a relation to leave it to. But your Ladyships knowledge of human nature will lead you to judge that this circumstance is of little consequence in the business since our wishes for riches are seldom satisfied by possessing more than we can use enjoy or bequeath. I may be mistaken in my own case but I have always taught myself to bound my worldly prospect by possession of my official emoluments which would add £1000, or £1300, a year to my income without adding £50 to my expenses.

Lord Mellville is I think very serious in wishing some arrangement to be made [in] my favour & has written strongly to his son on my behalf; & I am sure R. Dundas will exert himself. Still however I do not care altogether to trust a thing of this nature to those who though they love me well have many others who have claims upon them of a personal & political nature:¹ to your prudence delicacy & kindness my dear Lady Marchioness I trust any thing additional that can be done especially in the way of propitiating Mr. Percival.

¹ I have inserted a colon after "nature."

Will you acquaint me if [*all very blotted and confused*] you can do anything or if you advise me to trouble the Marquis on the subject. I have not applied either to his Lordship or the D. of Buccleugh being willing to see the issue of Lord Mellvilles application.

The Duke has always been my good friend nor have I been ungrateful for I have fortunately been able to assist his candidate materially in the impending contest for the County of Roxburgh. On the Marquis I have no claims except those of an importunate solicitor who acquires by prescription the right of being troublesome. *But* I never before solicited for myself.

On the whole if your Ladyship expects any more harmony from me you must take my case into your kind consideration recollecting always that I am only craving to be promoted to the emoluments of situation [*sic*] of which I have held the rank & discharged the duty gratis for five years compleat, & which I believe no one will say is much disproportioned to my birth expectations or standing in Society. I will not mix anything poetical in this long epistle that it may have power as it were by its native weight to sink into your heart. You remember the warning of Friar Bacons brazen head "Time is" that is the case with me just now & I fear if neglected we shall have the mournful sequel "Time was" & "Time shall be no more." Believe me Dear Lady Abercorn for once in my life your anxious But always your obliged & respectful

W. S.

EDINR. 15 *february* 1811.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO VISCOUNT MELVILLE

MY LORD,—The inclosed letter was put into my hands by Mr. Ferriar who had communicated to Mr. George Home the death of Mr. Pringle & whom I had requested to say generally to Mr. Home that whatever views of amending my situation this opening might hold out I should in pursuing them hold myself obliged in honor to attend to his interest. Your Lordship will observe that the view he takes of the subject is somewhat different from what occurred either to your Lordship or to myself. It is not for me to be my own carver but I have only to say that if the mode suggested by Mr. Home should be deemed eligible the business of the table will be easily & cheerfully discharged by my colleagues & myself. Or if any gentleman from the bar should take my situation with Mr. Home, there could be no difficulty whatever in indemnifying him for the resignation of a Sherifffdom or any other preferment of the kind. Mr. Home would probably continue to him the allowance of £200 which he lately proposed to resign to me and I would readily make up the difference.

I leave this matter to me probably the most important I shall ever have to discuss to that kind and friendly consideration with which your Lordship has always regarded my private concerns. The best part of my life is fast wasting in my present dispiriting situation and the favour of the public which has proved occasionally an important resource cannot be expected to be more permanent with me than with men of greater talents who have experienced its mutability. I am My Lord with a deep sense of all your Lordships kindness Your much obliged & honoured humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 20 *February* [1811]

P.S.—The Roxburghshire campaign advances pretty well.

The right honble Lord Viscount Mellville
etc etc etc Mellville Castle.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO DR. LEYDEN, CALCUTTA

MY DEAR LEYDEN,—Your letter of the 10th January 1810, reached me about ten days since, and was most truly wellcome, as containing an assurance of that which, however, I never doubted—the continuation of your unabated friendship, and affectionate remembrance.¹ I assure you Charlotte and I think and speak of you very often, with all the warmth due to the recollection of our early days, when life and hope were young with all of us. You have, I hope, long ere now, received my third poem, “The Lady of the Lake,” which I think you will like for *auld lang syne*, if not for its intrinsic merit. It have [*sic*] been much more successful than its predecessors, for no less than 25,000 copies have disappeared in eight months and the demand is so far from being abated, that another edition of 3000 is now at press. I send you a copy of the 4to by a son of Mr. Pringle of Whitebank; and his third son, William Pringle, being now on the same voyage to your shores, I beg to introduce him. He is one of the youngers mentioned in the Introduction to *Marmion* as a companion of my field Sports. I take the opportunity to send you a little print² which I think you will set some

¹ Leyden’s letter, accompanying a dissertation on the Chinese language by Mr Marshman, one of the missionaries of Serampore, after touching on his own studies and *Marmion* and General Malcolm, a brother Borderer who is gone to Persia to undo all the precious doings of that “blockhead Sir Herford Jones,” closes: “It is impossible however not to beg to be remembered to my dear Mrs Scott and the fact is that the Laswade Cottage, the blazing ingle &c. still recur as the happiest scenes of my youth. God bless you and your family My dearest Scott and reckon me ever yours JOHN LEYDEN.”

² *i.e.* an engraving, by Charles Turner, of Raeburn’s 1808 full-length portrait of Scott sitting by a ruined wall with Camp at his feet—Hermitage

value upon. It has just come out in London, and is reckoned very cleverly engraved. Poor old Camp, whom you will readily recognise, died about two years ago of old age, rather prematurely accelerated by good living. His place is supplied in some sort by a very sensible Scotch terrier ; but to have a dog whom I can love as much as Camp I must bring back all that were with me, and you, my dear Leyden, among the foremost, in our woodland walks by Eskes romantic shore . . .

I have not yet received the Chinese affair, though Helen has forwarded the letter which accompanied it. I have no other connexion with the *Quarterly Review* than as I am, with Ellis, Heber, and most of your old acquaintance, more partial to its politics than to those of your old friend Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review*. But I will recommend the work to the conductor, and if Southey will take it in hand (to whom the Missionaries have been obliged for the countenance they have hitherto received in the *Quarterly*), I have no doubts your friends will be satisfied with the manner in which they are treated . . .

You will expect news of European friends ; Heber is in excellent health, and amassing books, and discussing magnums as usual. Ellis has quite recovered, that is, he is in the state of health in which you knew him, never a very robust one. James Ballantyne is increasing in fortune and bulk ; his brother is now a bookseller here *meo auspice*. You must know that repeated favours on my part had the same effect upon [Constable?] that those from a higher quarter produced on Jeshurun—he wax'd fat and kicked. But he is aware by this time that he had done better to have kept his [temper] to himself for he may place £5000 minus in his books to the breach of our connexion occasioned by his own folly and his partner's insolence.

Castle and the mountains of Liddesdale in the background. The original was made for the Duke of Buccleuch ; a repetition is preserved at Abbotsford.

I expect this boy to call every moment, so I must close my letter. Mrs. Scott joins in sending you all the wishes of affectionate friendship. Pray take care of your health, and come home to us soon. We will find an ingleside and a corner of our hearts as warm for you as ever. My children are all well ; and now I hear the door-bell, *vale et nos ama.*

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 20th February 1811.¹

[1871 *Exhibition Catalogue*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—In farther explanation of my letter & the business it contains I enclose a letter from the gentleman of whose office I have the duty in possession & the income in expectancy. Mr. R. Dundas objects to his fathers proposal of the new Clerk taking a share of my burden as being contrary to the late Act of Parliament—Of course I cannot wish you press such an arrangement. But Mr. George Home points at one which would be equally advantageous to me & to which no objection can possibly apply except the wishes of his Majesties Ministers to prefer the interests of another gentleman to mine. Mr. Home in short proposes that I shall be named to the vacancy leaving him to discharge as much of the duty of his own office as he can which all my brethren are anxious to make quite easy to him. As he has made this very handsome proposal it would be my business to take care that any burden he might have to discharge should be a very light one & I have no doubt Mr. Dundas would soon give him another associate. Lord Melville has written transmitting this proposal to his son, but I am not sanguine in my hopes of altering his opinion.

The gentleman who will probable [*sic*] be preferred to me is so little anxious on the subject that he offered to resign

¹ This letter could not have reached its destination, Leyden having sailed from Calcutta with the expedition against Java in March 1811, where he died of fever in August following.

[*bis*] his pretensions in my favour & actually did so—But I could not with justice to my own feelings accept of this sort of personal sacrifice or owe that to the disinterestedness of a gentleman on whom I had no claims, which I think after five years gratuitous labour in the office I have at least some claim to expect from my services backed by the Interest of those who may have the inclination & power to back them by their intercession. But from the enclosed extract of a letter from Mr. Dundas to Ld. Mellville I believe it will require very powerful weight indeed to do me any good.

At the same time I will not be wanting to myself nor leave my friends unacquainted with the circumstances in which I am placed. *Mr. David Hume* mentioned as the preferable candidate is unconnected with Mr. *Geo: Home* my colleague. He is a most worthy & respectable man & has repeatedly refused a situation of a judge. But I cannot quite admit that his merits are of a nature very superior to mine considering the vacancy has occurred in the department where I have been labouring so long & fruitlessly.

Excuse my dear friend all this trouble for to whom can I look so readily as to you in this important conjuncture. I have the honour to be Your Ladyships Most obedient & much obliged

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 22 *February* [1811]

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES ARBUTHNOT¹

SIR,—I am honoured by your letter & am inexpressably obliged by the interest you have been pleased to take in my affairs at the request of my kind & never failing friend

¹ Charles Arbuthnot (1767-1850), after holding various diplomatic posts, was from 1809 to 1823 one of the joint secretaries of the Treasury, and so an influential person to appeal to in Scott's causes. He was the most confidential friend of the Duke of Wellington, and figures frequently in the *Greville Memoirs* under the nickname of "Gosh."

the Marchioness of Abercorn. You may rely upon my observing your caution & what I am about to mention to you I will entreat your goodness to consider as equally confidential for I am well aware that the Dundas family who have been long my kind & intimate friends have the warmest wishes to serve me while at the same time they must necessarily feel themselves trammel'd with a variety of claims on their patronage & may not perhaps be the less zealous for an occasional hint from a quarter which may be friendly to me. Mr. David Hume (the gentleman whose claims were considered as preferable to mine & undoubtedly they were most weighty) is now out of the field, having finally declined to accept the offer. There are *two* ways in which I may be promoted to the emoluments of my situation. The one is clear explicit & but for one circumstance by far the most eligible. It is simply that as Mr. George Home my colleague formerly resigned his sole commission to accept a joint nomination with me, so now he & I should resign that joint commission & should be separately nominated Clerks of Session I in the vice of Mr. Pringle & Mr. Home in his own place. This arrangement would be agreeable to Mr. George Home my colleague as well appears from his letter to Mr. Ferrier in possession of the Marchioness. My brethren in office are unanimous in wishing this arrangement, there can be no legal or formal objection to it nor shall we be at at [*sic*] the least loss in supplying any of Mr. Home's deficiencies arising from his age & deafness as the duty is not heavy and we are all at liberty to work for each other. But I fear this will not quite meet Mr. R. Dundas's views as I can easily conceive he would like to extend his patronage as much as possible by obliging two persons—In the event of this being the case or of Mr. David Hume (for the *third* time) changing his mind & choosing to step between me & the office, there will I doubt be no remedy but by way of pension to Mr. George Home as a superannuated

officer who has been I believe forty years in office & has become from deafness & age absolutely unfit to discharge the duties. That such a person has a legitimate claim to retire upon a pension has always been admitted & the circumstance of my having born [*sic*] him on my shoulders for five years can scarcely be held to enable the public to saddle me with him for ever. The later the pension is applied for, after age & infirmities have rendered it a just measure, the more the public is benefited & at any other moment than when the Pitt administration was going to pieces & I like others was glad to get a piece of the wreck to float me ashore I should have done myself & family injustice to have accepted the hard terms I at present lie under.

I have just had some intimation that Mr. *David Hume* is a third time hesitating—Upon my honour I think it a little hard that any man should have an office *forced* upon him after repeated refusals formally communicated to his friends & competitors & that in a department where another not altogether void of pretensions has been labouring for nothing for five years—I saw Lord Mellville who I found very warmly disposed to second me using the strong expression that if he had any interest in Scotland he should see my claims attended to. I believe the pension business is the only chance I have of relief in this country but I am not wedded to it nor too old to seek preferment elsewhere should everything fail me.

I beg my most respectful compliments to the kind & friendly Lady who engaged such powerful assistance on my behalf. You will find my friends when the office is fairly filled up will require a *flapper* [?] as indeed they have more than enough to engage their attention. I am with much respect Sir Your obliged & Most humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 23 *february* [1811]

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO VISCOUNT MELVILLE

[Feb. 1811]

MY LORD,—Availing myself of the kind interest you have always taken in my affairs I have to request your attention to the inclosed copy of a letter which I have received from Mr. Arbuthnot Secretary to the Treasury. I wrote to Mr. George Home on the subject of the arrangement to which it refers on Sunday last & have not as yet heard from him on the subject. It would be very indelicate in me to have even the appearance of hurrying Mr. Homes determination on a matter in which I am to be the party obliged. Although at the same time I have explained to him that I propose no advantage at his expence.

At the same time I should be happy that Mr. Home were acquainted with the contents of Mr. Arbuthnots letter which seem to intimate that the affair depends upon his resolution as I am sure his knowlege of the world will point out to him that those who have to day the power of assisting me may tomorrow have only the inclination. I do not possess the information Mr. Arbuthnot requires of me nor if I did should I wish to proceed further in the matter untill I am apprised of Mr. Homes wishes & determination.

Mr. Homes kindness & liberality of which I gave your Lordship a convincing proof, even before this business came forward, encourage me to hope that sanctiond as the transaction is both by Law & Equity he will not upon light grounds refuse to accede to it. I have the honour to be ever My dear Lord Your Lordships much obliged & honord humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET *Friday Evening*

Lord Viscount Mellville.

&c. &c. &c.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,—I inclose for your Lordships perusal a letter from Mr. Arbuthnot of the Treasury from which it would seem that there will be no difficulty made to pension off Mr. George Home provided he will apply for the Superannuation. I wrote to him on Sunday mentioning what was proposed and assuring him that I did not propose in advancing my own interest to do the least injury to his for which my friends will give him fuller assurance & security than he himself would desire. I have not heard from him in reply, but his offer of returning to the table was so handsome & my request seems so reasonable that I hope he will start no objection to the arrangement. If your Lordship should think with Mr. Arbuthnot that a few lines from yourself might have the effect to determine him in my favour I am sure I shall not weary your goodness in requesting this further assistance towards bringing to an end this matter which without your Lordship[s] kind & active patronage would never have advanced so far.

I inclose an abstract of the Superannuation Act from which it appears than an Officer serving fifteen years & being upwards of sixty may retire on two thirds of his salary and emoluments. Mr. Home is I should suppose much above sixty & as I observe from the Books of Sederunt was twenty five years in office before I was conjoined with him & five years have elapsed since our joint commission. So there can be no doubt as to his title to the pension if he chuses to apply. His salary & emoluments stand in a particular condition. The judicature Act fixes £1000 as the future salary of Clerks of Session & allows each Clerk then in possession £100 a year for life as Compensation for patronage etc. The Court of Excheq: by an order on the last day of last term allowd each Clerk £200 yearly in further & full compensation but this last sum is made payable during incumbency only & not for life. It seems

to me therefore that Mr. Home may retain the £100 for life even after his retirement, but as he must resign the £1000 charged in the fee fund & the £200 payable in Exchequer during incumbency he will be entitled under the act to a pension for £800 being two thirds of the above sum, & my friends will not permit him to be a loser upon the difference between £900 & the full emoluments of his office.

I have only to add that this arrangement will be in the highest degree satisfactory to me & will serve to relieve me in every material degree from a pressure which I cannot think Mr. Home would wish to continue a moment longer than it is necessary for his own interest & Security.

I cannot express my sense of your Lordships kind & persevering goodness & you must be sensible how much I calculate upon it since I intrude with so little ceremony. I am ever my dear Lord Your truly obliged & most respectful Servant

W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET, *Thursday* [February 1811]

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO LORD MELVILLE

[*Private*]

MY DEAR LORD,—I send the copy of Mr. Arbuthnots letter with a few lines from myself to your Lordship in case you should think it suitable to forward them also. If I have a letter from Mr. H. I will write to your Lordship tomorrow to save you as much trouble as possible. I am with Gratitude your Lordships truly obliged

W. SCOTT

[No address. Between *February and March* 1811]

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—Two of the enclosed were sent me yesterday and I take the liberty to beg your acceptance of one of them. It is prettily engraved and not worth refusing—the dog is my poor deceased *Camp* whom your Ladyship has often heard me mention : my friends wrote as many elegies for him in different languages as ever were poured forth by Oxford or Cambridge on the death of a crowned head. I have latin, french, italian, Greek, Hebrew, German, Arabic, and Hindostanee poems to his memory—The distant view is that of Hermitage Castle which the artist had ingenuity enough to draw from a very wretched sketch of mine. There was a Mezzotinto print done from the same picture but far inferior to the enclosed. I hope you will honour it with a corner in your Boudoir.

A thousand thanks for the kind interest you have taken in my very trifling yet to me most important concern. Mr. Arbuthnots attention to it will be of the last consequence & I am infinitely obliged by the kind readiness with which he has undertaken it. It has been considered proper to give Mr. David Hume the vacant Clerkship which he has with great difficulty been prevailed with to accept of. His ambition was to be a Baron of Exchequer & I believe or rather suspect that it was a wish to remove him from an object to which the L. Advocate himself casts an eye that occasioned their forcing the present office upon him. By way of compensation to me for passing me over they now propose to give my colleague Mr. Geo. Home a pension under the Act for providing superannuated office-holders. I shall be *perfectly satisfied* with this arrangement & upon reading over the Act attentively I cannot see there can be the least objection stated to it. Lord Mellville has assured me in the warmest & kindest terms that if he has the least interest left in Scotland the thing shall be done. There has not been since my recollection a time in which

preferment has flowed in upon the bar with so full a spring-tide. A double Judges gown,¹ the situation of Solicitor General, that of Judge Admiral, three Sheriffdoms, a Clerkship of Session, a Judge Commissioners seat, with many more minute crums [*sic*] of comfort have fallen among us like the Manna in the wilderness at the time the friends of this administration looked for nothing but being turned out of what they had. All the gentlemen promoted are either my early friends companions & equals or very much my juniors. I own therefore I shall feel hurt if as Jorick says while it is raining mitres from heaven as it were, none of them should light upon my head. Or as Cowley more practically complains of the neglect which he experienced when he was passed over in the distribution of favours at the Restoration, & when after fourteen years service he was disappointed of the Mastership of the Savoy which had been promised him.

As a fair morning of the blessed Spring
After a tedious stormy night
Such was the glorious entry of our king
Encircling plenty drop'd on every thing.
Plenty he sowd below & cast about him light.
But then alas ! to me alone
One of old Gideon's miracles was shown
For every tree & every herb around
With pearly dew was crown'd
And upon all the quickend ground
The fruitful seed of heaven did brooding lie
And nothing but the Muses fleece was dry

[*MS. sewed in here*]

The Rachel for which twice seven years & more
Thou didst with faith & labour serve
And didst (if faith & labour can) deserve
Though she contracted was to thee
Given to another didst thou see
Given to another who had store
Of fairer & of richer wives before
And not a Leah left thy recompense to be.

¹ *i.e.* a Lord of Session and also a Lord of Justiciary.

The last lines come very near my situation for I suppose a Clerkship of Session is as like Rachel as the Mastership of the Savoy. But Mr. Arbuthnott gives me good hope of a Leah in recompense, in shape of a pension to Mr. Geo. Home : I am far from being offended at the preference given to my friend Mr. David Hume a most excellent & highly accomplished man but of a temper so shy & reserved unless to his intimate friends that he has repeatedly said he would not accept the offer unless with the view of the assistance which I can easily & will cheerfully give him. Your Ladyship will readily believe that being in such habits [?] I cannot but rejoice in his appointment. I shall be quite satisfied with what is proposed for me provided it does not as has been hitherto my hard fortune stop short at the proposal & vanish in ineffectual expressions of regret & goodwill. I would never have my friends do anything for me which they cannot defend upon grounds both of law & justice. But I think I am entitled to expect under all the circumstances that no apprehension of frivolous or unreasonable cavil being made out to deter them from assisting me.¹ It is very true that anything done in my favour may be subject to more malignant scrutiny than in another case ; but then it ought not to be forgotten why I am more disadvantageously situated in this respect than others of my rank, nor ought the prejudices of the Foxites against me to prevent my friends from doing me right since these prejudices would not have existed but for the warmth & sincerity of my attachment to Lord Mellville. Of all this both L. M. & Mr. R. Dundas are I am sure fully sensible nor is there any good reason for my teasing your Ladyship with the repetition excepting that out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. Mr. R. Dundas has thrown out a slight hint as if he would like to have my Sherifffdom. But if Mr. D. Hume retains

¹ Scott has mixed two constructions : " That no . . . apprehension be " and " I am entitled not to expect any apprehension . . . being," etc.

his professorship (worth £600) I see no reason for resigning my office with only £300. Besides I have assigned such reasons as I am persuaded will prevent Mr. Dundas from insisting on what I will not comply with, for I don't see why I should buy a favour & that very dearly too. So like my predecessor in that office the Outlaw Murray renowned in ballad I am determined to be

— Sheriff of Ettrick forest
Surely while upward grows the tree.¹

Upon the whole I flatter myself that things go well—much the more do I so flatter myself because you my kind friend interest yourself in the matter & that Mr. Arbuthnott will have an eye upon it for your sake & will take care it does not slip out of memory during the hurry of so many matters as R. Dundas has to think about—

I have some poetical matters to tell you about but I will not intermingle them with this stuff of Clerkships & pensions and Sherifffdoms. Ever your truly indebted & obliged

W. S.

EDN. 25 *February* [1811]

Pray have the goodness when you honour me with a line to say how Lady Hamilton & the little boy do—whether he is christened & by what name & what is his title.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,—I send your Lordship inclosed a copy of Mr. Homes answer which is decidedly unfavourable. I suspect it will hardly be possible to remove his scruples. It would be very easy for me to place Mr. Home in the situation he dislikes so much for were I to resign to—

¹ See *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i., for “The Sang of the Outlaw Murray.”

morrow as he could have no renewal of the joint commission he must *then* retire on the Superannuation Act. The last objection I could easily remove by ensuring my life for a certain annuity payable to Mr. Home in the event of his surviving me. Perhaps your Lordships intercession may have some weight with him. I am my dear Lord very gratefully yours

W. SCOTT

PARLIAMT. HOUSE *Saturday* [March 1811]

[No address]

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

Enclosure

Letter from George Home, Paxton, 6th March 1811, to Viscount Melville.

. . . I may be mistaken in the Construction I put upon the act, but it appears to me that there is no room for granting a Pension under it, when the office is filled by a Person capable to do the duties of it. The Treasury may no doubt grant the Pension, but it must be reported to Parliament that they may judge whether it has been properly granted. . . . While the Joint Commission subsists & the duties of the office [are] properly performed, I shall never prevail upon myself to run the risk of having that objection stated to my claim, or to have it said that this is a Job by which the Parties have secured to themselves a Joint Interest in the office and are now endeavouring to burden the Publick with a double salary. I should adhere to this resolution, even altho there was no other remedy for Mr. Scott's relief, but he has himself suggested the remedy, which is to resign his Joint Commission. I shall then be in a situation to claim under the act, content myself with the Pension & leave to Mr. Scott the Emoluments of the office.

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,—I am honoured with your letter and willingly defer my whole interest to your Lordships opinion & that of the Lord President. I cannot be in better or kinder hands and if Mr. Home should convince you of the illegality of the measure proposed or influence

you with doubt on the subject, God forbid I should press it or do Mr. Home the injustice to embarrass him by leaving him in the lurch—I would rather work for nothing all my life—But if Mr. Home's doubts should not be so supported as to have influence on your Lordships' mind my present feelings will dictate a resignation of my commission in which case Mr. Home's interest & convenience will be deeply compromised. For I conceive he cannot serve in the office—neither can it be performed by Mr. Walker & Mr. D. Hume the latter being a novice & it will be for Mr. Geo: Home to weigh his own interest instead of weighing mine against his objections to retiring upon the superannuation act & either to make that sacrifice to himself which he may decline to make to me & solicit for the superannuation pension or resign his office without any compensation whatever. Even in the former case he will be worse off than I now wish him to be for he is satisfied that if the proposed arrangement be carried through he will not lose a penny by it, whereas if a new commission is to be granted to any one, the person receiving it is hard under the highest penalties which extend also to the Secretary of State from having any understanding by which the incumbent can give the retiring officer a guinea out [of] his pocket. The only footing on which I could make this additional compensation (which I am ready to do either by purchasing him a life-annuity or paying him the purchase money) is that in the event of Mr. Home's resigning the joint interest he has in the commission & particularly his right to the emoluments, I neither take any new office nor have occasion to place myself within the danger of the Brokerage act which only refers to offices granted long after the date of my commission. I therefore feel myself at liberty to offer Mr. Home what I think full justice. But it is obvious no other person can legally make him the same compensation.

I suspect Mr. Home's chief fear and it is a very just

at least a very natural one is that his name may be dragd through parliament & the matter subjected to a sort of investigation (much the taste of the present day) which howsoever it may end cannot but occasion a gentleman of his age & habits great vexation and embarrassment. And this risque must appear more formidable as the Act respecting Superannuation declares that where the salaries are paid out of a feefund & where the said fee-fund is deficient the deficiency shall be made good by a vote of parliament. But on the other hand the Judicature Act declares that when the fee-fund of the Court of Session is inadequate to discharge the salaries of the Clerks & other burdens lawfully charged upon it, the Clerks salaries shall be made good in Exchequer. Now my brethren are kindly contented that Mr. Homes superannuation pension shall be drawn out of the first and readiest of the fund which will therefore be always adequate to the payment thereof : and they will content themselves with seeking redress in Exchequer under the terms of the Judicature Act. Instead of sending Mr. Home to seek it in parliamt. I have a notion this assurance will remove much of Mr. Homes real objection to the measure. Mr. Ferrier thought it might be right to place this circumstance under his consideration so I wrote him a few lines to that purpose.

I send the Commission which expressly assigns the whole profits of the office to Mr. Home. But I conceive that does not bar him from resigning it and placing our arrangement on the more equitable footing of the Superannuation Act which has been made since the date of the commission expressly to rule such cases as ours. Nor does it I apprehend in the event of Mr. Home being unreasonably negligent of my interest (which would be entirely contrary to all I have heard & the little I have seen of his disposition) offer any obstacle to my resigning in which case Mr. Home would have no other means of getting a guinea from the office but by the very act of

which he doubts whether he be entitled to the benefit. Now if he in such case being an existing Clerk entitled to act & to draw the full salary of his office could retire upon the superannuation pension in favour of any one but me the question seems only to be whether five years gratuitous service (which I am at liberty to discontinue at pleasure) have rendered me unworthy of the benefit of an arrangement which must rule every other case. I am with much respect Your Lordships truly obliged & grateful

WALTER SCOTT

[*March*, 1811]

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

To LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am very sorry to inform you that our negotiation stands some chance of failing through the obstinacy of Mr. Home. Every objection of the nature you pointed out in your kind note was obviated to his full contentment. But hitherto to no purpose. He pretends scruples at being a pensioner on the public yet never considers he has been this five years the pensioner of an individual. Lord Melville has taken him in hand & may possibly make some impression upon him—nothing can be more warm than the interest Lord M. has taken in this matter so much so that he will hardly allow that it is increased by your most kind & affecting letter on my behalf which he shewed me. He understands Scotchmen & usually carries his point so I must e'en trust to his influence. I think however Mr. Home will perceive his own interest is more deeply implicated in the matter than he seems at present to be aware of. For if his hard-hearted conduct should oblige me to resign my share in our joint commission how would he stand? Act he cannot, & nobody under the circumstances would act for him & therefore (as no new joint commission can be granted) he would find himself under

the necessity either of soliciting the superannuation pension or resigning without any pension at all—at any rate he could not have a penny *more* than his pension whereas in my case facilities might be given & have been offered to make him as well as at present. This would be too irritating [?] a string for me to touch upon but I will contrive that Lord M. or some mutual friend shall place it strongly before this Scotch Shylock who sticks to his bond with all the obstinacy of his Jewish prototype.

I believe there is nothing at the bottom but sheer pride—he thinks himself well as he is & does not choose to submit to the least alteration that may infer either risque or disgrace in his apprehension let the consequences to me be what they may. Add to this he is an old bachelor with no relative under the cope of heaven but a maiden aunt who resides with him—they are both upwards of seventy poor dear souls & have between them scarcely twelve thousand pounds a year to keep house upon.

This is but cold news of our fine project my dear Lady Abercorn & I know you will be grieved at it. It is possible however things may take a turn especially if my ancient rider could be prevailed upon to come to Edinburgh where we might get the Lord President upon him. I write Mr. Arbuthnott a few lines to thank him for his kind & inestimably useful assistance & to inform him where the matter hitches.

No circumstance of success or failure can increase or diminish the gratitude with which I am Dear Lady Abercorn Your faithful & obliged

W. SCOTT

EDINR. 3 *March* [1811]

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES ARBUTHNOT

[8 *March* 1811]

SIR,—It is my duty to acquaint you that after some days silence I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Home

of which I sent a copy to Mr. Dundas in which with some expressions of regret & civility he declines applying for the Superannuation pension because as he conceives the granting it may expose Mr. D. to censure in the House of Commons. Mr. Dundas is the last man whom I should wish to bring under obloquy to favour any selfish views of mine ; but I conceive he may considering his excellent good sense & experience besides his having access to the first law assistance be very safely trusted with the charge & defense of his own conduct in any matter of this kind. Mr. Home in applying for his superannuation will only undo a previous transaction which nothing but its date prevents from being illegal & put our relative arrangement upon the footing prescribed by an act expressly introduced to rule such cases. Were I to retire tomorrow & there is nothing to prevent my doing so Mr. Home who has been from deafness long absolutely incapable of doing his duty would have no alternative but to weigh his scruples of delicacy against his own substantial interest, (when they would probably prove lighter than when balanced with mine) & as then [*? MS. sewed in here*] scale predominated he must either claim his superannuation or retire without pension or emolument of any kind. In either case it seems hard that he should hesitate to do for me what he would find himself obliged to do were I to leave him to himself since I understand the point to be clear that no one could be placed in the situation which I now hold with relation to him.

Lord Melville has taken up the matter with great warmth & jointly with the Head of our Court the Lord President has written to Mr. George Home to come to Edinburgh to talk over the matter. If he can convince them of the reality of his difficulties I am sure I have no inclination to press any arrangement which my friends shall think even dubious—if not, & if he continues to found upon mere whims of his own a refusal to do me

what is really substantial justice he will set me much at liberty from the necessity of consulting his interest in the remainder of the transaction. In this latter case supposing that I resign my situation Mr. Home will find himself obliged to resign also for his total deafness renders him incapable of acting as Clerk & the other two gentlemen now in office (one being a mere novice) could not discharge the duty of the Court which is at this moment rather burdensome. I will put Lord Melville in possession of these circumstances & I believe they will have some weight in forming Mr. Homes ultimate decision. I am very glad he is coming to town as we shall find *where* the business *really* hitches.

I beg pardon for troubling you with all the trivial detail of difficulties & private interests & can only trust to the kind interest which you have taken in my success for forgiveness. Lord Mellville will probably get an answer to his letter tomorrow or next day & as the Lord President & his Lordship have more influence with Mr. Home than anyone has it is probable he will come to town in which case I shall reckon my cause half won. I will do myself the honour to apprise you of the result. Meanwhile I remain with much respect Your obliged & indebted humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

You will be rejoiced to hear my dear friend that your kind & friendly exertions in my behalf are at length likely to succeed. My ancient Colleagues opinion or rather the wind of his inclination after shifting to every point on the compass has at length come to blow fair for my desired harbour. In short he consents to apply for the Superannuation with which he declares he will be satisfied positively declining to accept any offer to make up the difference between two-thirds & full pay. I am totally at loss to know what motives have at length moved

him to this unexpected compliance only I suppose his natural feelings of justice have got the better of the wayward & testy temper of an old bachelor of seventy five. Lord Mellvilles rhetoric was lost on him—so was my Lord Presidents—at least to all appearance—only he offered that if I would resign first then he would resign also ; but there were circumstances that might have rendered this a little hazardous. I yesterday wrote my doubts & wishes on that subject to Mr. Arbuthnott very fully & I now wish I had spared him the trouble of that long letter but it was impossible after Mr. Home had declared himself so wedded to his own opinion as to say “ that call it folly or obstinacy or what my friends or his friends chose no argument should prevail on him to apply for the superannuation unless I resigned first.” He was once a very different sort of man but

In lifes last stage what various scenes surprize
Fears of the brave and follies of the wise

He has now (thank God) totally resigned the management of the business to Mr. Ferrier with *carte blanche*—this gentleman (a kind-hearted old Highlander) is my warm friend as indeed all my brethren in office have always shown themselves to be ; he is now the oldest of our number & having been long Mr. Home’s friend & colleague may be able to keep him in good humour.

Meanwhile we are hurrying everything forward for fear of a relapse. I am just going to Lord Mellvilles to prepare the necessary paper for Mr. Homes signature. But as I was writing this change of circumstances for Mr. Arbuthnott’s information I must have been ungrateful indeed not to find time to communicate what I trust will give your Ladyship pleasure. I will write more fully in a few days when I forward the Application for Mr. Home desires I will see it through the Treasury. Ever Dear Lady Marchioness Your obliged & grateful

EDINR. 10 March [1811].

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO HIS DAUGHTER SOPHIA

[1810?]

BENEATH every Kings reign Papa expects Sophia to write down neatly & in good spelling the following particulars.

Whether his reign was peaceful or warlike.

If warlike with whom he was at war & particularly whether with his own subjects or foreign nations. Also whether he was victorious in battle (generally) or defeated.

Whether any great alterations of government took place in his reign & what they were.

Whether he was a good man or a bad.

Whether the condition of his subjects was amended or became worse under his reign.

[*Letters to Governess*, 1905]

TO MRS. LEADBEATER ¹

MADAM,—I am honoured by your beautiful verses and beg your acceptance of my most respectful thanks. You do me great honour in supposing me able to celebrate a nation in which I am so much interested as Ireland. Whether I shall ever strike the harp again my graver occupations render very doubtful, but should it so happen

¹ Mary Leadbeater, grand-daughter of Abraham Shackleton, the head-master under whom Burke was educated, and herself a correspondent of Burke's, was a Quaker and published *Poems*, 1808. Her *Annals of Ballitore* are "an admirable representation of Irish life from 1766 to 1823." These were not printed till 1862. Among the Abbotsford papers is a letter from her to Scott: "I am gratified, I believe I may say flattered in a threefold sense, by the very kind and polite letter with which Walter Scott has honoured me. It was a condescension which I did not venture to expect and it has emboldened me to present to thee a little work of my own, written for the use of my country folk in humble life. Perhaps it may interest thee more in its favour to know that the outlines of the characters were sketched from two of my neighbours, and that the recitals introduced are literally true. I am, respectfully,

MARY LEADBEATER

Ballitore, Ireland 1st of 5th month 1811."

With Scott she shared a friendship and correspondence with George Crabbe. Scott erroneously styles her "Miss" Leadbeater.

I will not fail to carefully consider the hint you have favoured me with, especially should it ever be in my power to visit Ireland. From the mode of dating your letter I conclude I am addressing a lady of a religious profession for whose simplicity of manner and purity of morals I have had from infancy the most deep respect, and which adds to the sense of obligation with which I subscribe myself your honoured and very humble servant ¹

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 12th of March 1811.

[*O'Donoghue's Tour in Ireland*]

TO MISS SMITH

I HAVE been shockingly ungrateful dear Miss Smith in not sooner thanking Mrs. Smith and you for your obliging and interesting communications. I am very glad that the Manager found his advantage in the *Lady of the Lake* which as far as I can judge is very well adapted for the Stage ; and I am delighted that you were thought a proper representative of Ellen because that is paying Ellen a very high compliment. Our attempt at the *Lady of the Lake* did not succeed quite so well yet it answered expectation I believe as to profit. The words of the poem were retained but as they were thrown into the arrangement of blank verse the dialogue had to those acquainted with the poem the appearance of an old friend with a new face. You always missed the expected and perhaps the remembered rhyme which had a bald effect. I think your plan infinitely preferable. In point of representation, Mrs. Young played the mad captive superbly and threw every body into tears. Mrs. H. Siddons did not perform Ellen so well as I expected—she had got somehow a little too *Columbinish*, and fell short in the dignity which should mingle even with the playful

¹ In her *Annals of Balliore* (1862), under the date 1818, Mrs. Leadbeater alludes to Scott's son—*vide* vol. i. p. 397.

simplicity of a high-born maiden. But you are not to whisper this to any one for Mrs. H. Siddons is a very particular friend of mine and I know it would hurt her were it to come round. They are now going to try the London Edition of this said poem called the Knight of Snowdown which will probably produce them a house or two. I am told Roderick recovers and marries Ellen there being no Malcolm Graeme in the case. You must know this Malcolm Graeme was a great plague to me from the beginning—you ladies can hardly comprehend how very stupid lovers are to every body but mistresses—I gave him that dip in the Lake by way of making him do something but wet or dry I could make nothing of him. His insignificance is the greatest defect among many others in the poem. But the canvas was not broad enough to include him considering I had to groupe the King, Roderick, and Douglas. I should have told you that a young man of uncommon talent and accomplishment (Mr. Richard¹ Terry) played Roderick Dhu delightfully. He is a rising actor, studies hard and is a man of extensive reading, fine taste and amiable manners. He often came to read Shakespeare to me of an evening. I fear his voice will never be strong enough for the immense concavity of a London house but his conceptions are admirable and as he has good sense and principle I am certain he will one day make a figure. Your story of an immense Epic poem at a guinea a line sounds a formidable contract for the poor bookseller and is much of a piece with one which appeared in the Sheffield papers announcing my immediate departure for Portugal to gather poetic images ; I suppose out of the cannon mouth.² There is this difference however between them that had I no body to care about but myself

¹ Scott's slip for "Daniel."

² So Dibdin had reported in a letter ; and Miss Smith had heard in Ireland that "you are now engaged on an Epic poem of great magnitude, at the tolerable rate of one guinea a line, a voluntary offer of your Publishers. I hope it may be so."

I would go to Portugal but I would hardly have lent myself to the sort of job-bargain you mention. The truth is I neither have written nor think of writing a single line of poetry and I should think it very injudicious after the flattering kindness which the public has shewn me to press upon them before I have it in my power (which may never be the case) to offer them something decently worth their acceptance. I beg my kind compliments to Mrs. Smith with my best thanks for the trouble she has taken in my behalf— I hope this will find the eyes in a fair way of recovery. You have been exercising them I suppose too severely upon your Irish conquests. Mrs. Scott sends best regards and I ever am dear Miss Smith
Yours very Truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 12 *March*, 1811.

Many thanks for the sweet tune to which my unworthy words have been adapted. Lady Douglas was just now here and enquired after you.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS

MY DEAR SIR,—I am honoured with your letter but before it came to hand Mr. George Home had given his approbation of the terms of a petition tendering his resignation on his claim being admitted under the Superannuation Act & as it went to him yesterday to be subscribed & forwarded you will probably receive it within a post or two of this letter. I am very sorry to find Mr. Perceval entertains the doubts which on consideration Mr. Home has seen ground to abandon. It is with great diffidence I offer my own opinion that the Act is intended as much for the benefit of those officers who actually discharge the duty of the office as for those whose age entitles them to a provision upon retirement.

It is as much the public interest that he who labours shall be rewarded as that he who can labour no longer shall have the means of retiring upon [a] competency. Accordingly it is coupled as it were with the Brokerage and Reversion bills which expressly prohibit all such commissions as Mr. H. & I now hold. In accepting of Mr. Homes resignation on the Act 30. c. 117. the commissioners of the Treasury will substitute a legal arrangement upon the principle of the existing law in place of one which nothing but its priority of date prevents from being illegal. Were I dead or did I resign, Mr. Home who cannot discharge the duty would be ex concessis entitled to the benefit of the Act & the full emolument of the office would pass undiminishd to his successor. It would be hard to say that five years gratuitous service ought to place me in a worse situation with the public than a stranger would be that has never served them at all. It is very true my present situation was of my own seeking but what could I do. Mr. Pitt was just dead & you cannot have forgot the recommendation in my favour which I shall always regard as the proudest circumstance of my life. If the Act Cap. 117 had then existed there can I think be little doubt that as Mr. Home was fully entitled to the benefit of it by age & service so I under all the circumstances would probably have been his successor in an unincumberd office. But I was obliged in the moment of the dissolution of a friendly ministry to take such a bargain as I could get & the existing law would give me ; just as sailors when the vessell is sinking catch at the next piece of the wreck to float ashore upon. Perhaps also I might not be altogether unreasonable in entertaining some hopes that in case my friends should come in again and an opening occur in my own department they might consider my gratuitous service as affording me some claim for favourable consideration. Now as the claims of a more meritorious individual have interfered with mine & been I dare say very justly

preferd the circumstance may I think be allowd to give some weight to any reasonable application I may now make for relief.

In order to bring my situation as closely under the Act as possible & to place the point of form out of the question I inclose my own resignation which you will make use of as your prudence may suggest. I apprehend the circumstance of its being offerd will in itself almost entirely take away the objection in point of form & that the acceptance of it may be judged unnecessary. For if my resignation be tenderd Mr. Home is surely in imminent danger of being calld upon to discharge the duties of an office for which his deafness renders him altogether incompetent & the objection that there is one in the office able to discharge them flies off when that persons resignation is tenderd. It will then be for the wisdom of the Lords of the Treasury to consider whether there is any essential difference to the country between accepting Mr. Home's resignation as matters now stand and having me in possession of the office or doing the same thing rather more circuitously by accepting my resignation also, & making a new grant to any one who has interest enough to get it. In either case the necessity of granting the pension seems to be [the] same and perhaps Mr. Perceval may be inclined to wave his scruples to the first mode of proceeding when it is considered that the case is absolutely singular & can never again occur.

If it be found absolutely necessary that my resignation accompany or precede that of Mr. Home there is nothing to prevent the Regent issuing a new Commission. For there never was such a thing as a Clerk of Sessions commission unless for life—it would be contrary to express statute & indeed so very much was this the case that untill the late judicature act the Clerks had a right even to sell their commissions. As to the regents boggling why I must run my chance unless Mr. Percevals

scruples should give way upon seeing that Mr. Home is placed *substantially* though not altogether *formally* under the pressure for which the Act offers relief. That the measure has justice & equity to recommend it can hardly be disputed so I really still hope it may be carried through, as at first proposed by the Advocate & you and sanctioned by Lord Mellville & Lord president.

Mr. Perceval is not perhaps aware that Mr. Home besides being Seventy six and upwards is perfectly deaf and incapable of business of any kind, & that our situation since the division of the Courts has been a very busy one.

As Mr. Home has intimated his anxious wish that the matter should be brought to a decision it is no longer in my power to postpone my application and indeed his resignation will be in your hands or perhaps in those of Mr. Arbuthnot almost as soon as this letter. If I had got your letter a few days sooner I would have suffered every thing to lie over till our meeting but I believe the attempt to postpone it now Mr. Homes resolution is made up would make him very irritable indeed & that I should never be able to bring him to any subsequent arrangement. Had D. Humes commission been given to me all difficulty would have been removed. Mr. Geo: Home must then have had his pension & Mr. D. Hume would have got my office instead of Mr. Pringles.

I accompany this letter with a copy of the Resignation of Mr. Home which he has sanctioned with his approbation—with my own resignation to be used at your discretion—& with two certified Copies of Mr. Homes original Admission in July 1781 and of the Joint Commission to him and me in 1806. Mr. Ferriar as Senior Clerk has attested by docquet upon Mr. Homes petition the fact which it contains and also certified the extent of his emoluments.

I shall send this long scrawl to Lord Mellville to be forwarded to you after his Lordship has perused it. We

will be delighted to see you here especially as we did not meet the last time you were here. Believe me dear Colonel
Ever truly your much obliged

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 14 [*March* 1811]¹

The Right Honble Mr. Dundas.

With : Copy of Commission to George Home & Walter Scott.

Petition of Walter Scott.

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO MRS. APRICE, 16 BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON

MY DEAR MRS. APRICE,²—I have been much to blame in not sooner acknowledging the pleasure I received from your kind token of remembrance but probably the dullness of my letter will be the best apology for its delay. I was indeed at the time of receiving your letter in some uncertainty whether I should not have had an opportunity of returning my thanks in person but that is now at an end for I certainly shall not see London untill next Spring at soonest. We are here as nearly as possible in the same quiescent state in which we were last winter rather more secluded since we lost the temptation of

¹ Scott has dated the letter "Edinr 14 *feby*," but another hand has struck out "*feby*" and written in red ink "March 1811."

² Mrs. Apreece (1780-1855) was the daughter of Charles Kerr, a younger son of William Kerr of Kelso. Married in 1799, she was left a widow in 1807, when she retired to Edinburgh and became a brilliant hostess. "Mrs. Apreece and Mrs. Waddington," says Mrs. Fletcher, "divided the admiration of Edinburgh circles between them—the one attractive by the vivacity of her conversation, the other by her remarkable beauty and the grace of her manners." In the summer of 1810 she had been one of the party in Scott's Western tour. In 1812 she married Sir Humphry Davy, whom her social ambitions did not improve. "Have you seen the Last Days of Sir Humphry Davy? I knew him intimately in his best days. He would have been a happier and a greater man than he was if he had been less successful in his fortunes. No man was ever the better for living in what is called the world."—SOUTHEY, 10th March 1830. For Scott's candid opinion of her see the letter to Morritt of 26th April, p. 481.

your good neighbourhood going no where but to the Theatre and seeing no one but our ancient gossips who are contented to stupify [?] with us in our own way. Of Literary society I can say but little. I have not dined at our club once this winter nor been at a[n] evening party excepting one. But I understand Edinburgh has been as lively as usual though neither possessing a Thalia in the shape of my gentle and lively cousin [n]or a Melpomene in that of the weeping-ripe Mrs. W——

You flatter me excessively by telling me of the extent and regularity of my correspondence. You know (who understand conversation so well) that no praise is more tickling than that which is equally unexpected and undeserved. But I am afraid I understand your irony too well to devour a compliment I deserve so little. As for Mr. Davy I met him once among the mountains of Cumberland and liked him excessively though we can be scarcely said ever to have renewed our acquaintance. I was particularly delighted with the total absence of pedantry which has always appeared to me the test of true genius. Charlotte begs to be remembered with all the warmth which she has left to spare having just exerted a considerable portion of that ardent quality in scolding me for purchasing a pair of Highland pistols of the antique model. They were to be sure very dear but quite irresistible being of steel inlaid with silver and might become the belt of Rob Roy himself. You see I retain all my hobby horses and shall be delighted when a visit to the Land of Cakes gives me an opportunity to air my stud for your amusement. Our little folks are all well and send their loves. Believe me dear Mrs. Aprice, Your respectful and Affect cousin

EDIN 2d April 1811

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MISS SMITH

MY DEAR MISS SMITH,—That nothing may be wanting in my power to enable you to represent the Witch Dame of Branksome in proper costume I lose no time in answering your letter.¹ The Lady when engaged in her magical intercourse with the Spirits should I think have a sort of stole or loose upper scarf with astrological hieroglyphics of the planets. I have seen Prospero wear such a thing which you may remember he desires Miranda to pluck from his shoulders. For the same reason I would have the hair loose in the first scene and afterwards put under such a head-dress as Queen Mary is usually represented with. The first scene should be a good deal studied in point of dress and scenery for I conceive the Lady's intercourse with supernatural beings is more to be understood from external appearances than from anything she actually says. I quite approve of your changing dress for the tournament— Only still be so good as remember you are a widow and must therefore be rather sumptuous than showy in attire. The black velvet with old point will be quite in taste and so will the relief of the green and gold. If you do not like Queen Mary's coif you may chuse among the prints to Birchs Lives.² Pray for my love drub your management out of the general blunder of dressing the Scottish borderers in Tartan— He might as well make them speak Gaelic. They should have the bonnet and in a very picturesque ballad by a living borderer I find a spirited description of the appearance of Wat of Harden as handed down by tradition from which some hints might be taken. I

¹ Miss Smith had written from Dublin on 31st March reporting that she was to take the part in a dramatised version of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* called "The Lady of Buccleuch, or Border Feuds."—"I wish for your opinion on the dresses—for I think she should change for the tournament &c." She has met Terry at Liverpool. She begs that Scott will write a tragedy for her to produce in London.

² Probably *The Heads of illustrious persons of Great Britain, engraven by Mr. Houbraken and Mr. Vertue. With their lives and characters by T. B.* [Thomas Birch, D.D.], fol., London, 1743. See *Abbotsford Library Catalogue*, p. 232.

should say that the poet is lineally descended from the Henchman of this famous marauder, a man selected for huge stature and great strength and called in allusion to his very unpoetical name of *Hog*, the Wild Boar of Falshope and that it is from family tradition that this account of his protector's array was handed down—

And he's away to Holy Rood / Among the nobles a'
Wi' bonnet like a girdle broad / O'er hair like Craighope snaw
His coat was o' the forest green / Wi' buttons like the moon
His trews were o' the good buck skin / Wi' a' the hair aboon
His twa hand sword hung round his neck / And rattled to
his heel

The rowels of his silver spurs / Were of the Rippon steel
His hose were braced wi' chains of airn / And round wi'
tassells hung

At ilka hamp of Harden's heel / The royal arches rung—¹

If Wat Tinlinn comes on the stage an excellent sketch of his proper costume may be seen in the frontispiece to the first or second Vol: of Grose's *Military Antiquities* ² where an English archer is represented in his leathern jacket studded with iron plates. Only Wat Tinlinn should have a pike instead of the ugly mallet in the print.

If I were to write anything for the stage it would be for the delight of dressing the characters after my own fancy. But I am sure I never shall have that pleasure. The ruinous monopoly of the two theatres necessarily excludes every-thing but shew and renders the managers absolutely dependent upon that class who have least real taste for the stage as an elegant amusement. *Their* hours must be studied, their taste must be consulted and the hours and taste of such an audience being necessarily at variance with those of the more polite and better educated part of society why truly we may say with a little alteration of the old song—

Our ancient English tragedy is banished out of doors
Our Lords & Ladies run to see Signoras & Signors.

¹ See Hogg's ballads. ² 2 vols., 4to, London, 1786-88.

It increases my good opinion of the Irish nation that they have not fallen into this general depravity of dramatic taste and that they do justice my dear Miss Smith to your merits. I shall be delighted when we can see you once more in the Land of Cakes as your letter seems to promise. Adieu my dear Miss Smith and pray let me know how the Lady of Buccleuch is received. Believe me with sincere regard your faithful friend and servant

W. SCOTT

EDIN. 5 *April* 1811.

[*Owen D. Young*]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINR. 10th *April* [1811]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—Leyden's direction is simply Calcutta—Bengal—I heard from him by the last ships he is flourishing like a green bay tree, strong in constitution & high in reputation. He is likely to push the researches into Indian antiquities as far as any savant we have hitherto sent out and as he totally postpones every other object I have no other apprehension than that he may hurry over too much ground to admit of his being severely accurate. He will be delighted with Kehama and I judge completely astonished at such a poem being produced by one who has never seen Indostan. As for Leyden's silence towards me for some years (which I sincerely hope is the only objection to him you hint at) I now impute it to the misrepresentations of a dissipated and worthless blackguard his brother whom I served for Leyden's sake as long as I possibly could until he rendered himself absolutely intolerable by coming to my house intoxicated.¹ Poor Jack of Leyden sent me some months ago a precious gage d'amitié in the shape of a

*
¹ See letter of 12th August 1810, p. 370.

poisoned creeze the hilt as brilliant as that of Excabbar
as to which you cannot but remember

—that all of Coleyne was the blade
And all the hilt of precious stone.

In short it is worthy of the bowels of Bonaparte himself
and I wish it were sheathed in them with my heart—
I pray his Majesty's mercy I should have said his guts for
bowels he hath none.

I have just got the Quarterly. I scarcely know the
Article of Kehama which has been greatly alter'd
especially in omitting quotations. Another time I shall
wish to have the final correcting of the proof sheets of my
own Articles. I dare say however the article is improved
on the whole for I wrote in a most excessive hurry to get
it into the last number which proved impossible the work
not being then published in London. I trust the Quarterly
will do well. Murray writes me that they print 6000 and
are daily gaining ground. I don't augur much inter-
ference from Longman's new review unless he has been
singularly fortunate in an editor.—What do you think of
Roscoe's mean-spirited pamphlet on Lord Gray's opinions
concerning the war? I always thought that man over-
rated but he seems to have grown actually silly.

Barrossa is indeed a glorious affair & gain'd too by a
“Gallant Graeme.” The effect of such a victory upon
the morale of the French army is likely to be incalculable
—But O my dear Southey for La Peña's head in a
charger! I fear the Spaniards will ruin the best cause
in the world & render their own valour and patriotism
altogether unavailing by the false pride of which King
William long since complained which will not suffer them
to acknowledge those deficiencies that ruin them. All the
officers I have seen lament that the courage & zeal of the
Spanish common soldiers have in every conflict fail'd
through the cowardice and ignorance of those who lead
them. They want subaltern & non-commissioned officers

dreadfully & most unfortunately the total want of education prevents them from drawing the natural supply of them by preferments from their own ranks—If while it is called today they would profit by the example of the Portuguese & put a few thousands of their levies under British Officers & British discipline I think I would stake my life on the final issue of the contest. Portugal now exhibits a glorious confutation of Lord Grenville's croaking.¹ I could not read yesterday's news without dinning your friar's prophecy into the ears of every one.

To Coimbra shall their reliques be brought
Such is the will divine !

I saw a letter from an officer of our flying artillery who since the retreat of Massena commenced had been with the van of the pursuers and almost constantly in sight & often engaged with the French rear. Their confusion & distress augmented on each movement : their flank had been turned at every stand which they attempted. Artillery, baggage, sick, wounded all were abandoned & hundreds of horses & mules were lying *hamstrung* upon the line of March. The writer is perhaps too sanguine for he anticipates the dispersion or surrender of that immense army. But that they have suffered and continue to suffer the greatest possible losses is indubitable. And all owing to the coolness & generalship of Wellington manifested not in military [matters] only but in the firm & confidential feelings with which he has inspired our allies. For there is no doubt that the unceasing activity of the Ordonanya was the principal means of reducing Massena to his present dilemma. It is astonishing with what unspeakable incredulity the opposition folks maintained this retreat to have been a mere colour. If so I hope as Justice Shallow says it is a colour Massena will die in. I beg my kind remem. to Mrs. Southey. I was very

¹ "How happy his [Massena's] retreat must make Lord Grenville, who has just delivered so wise an opinion upon the state of Portugal in the House of Lords."—SOUTHEY to Scott, 2nd April.

ungracious not to send my best thanks for Kehama. He has just returned from the Binder's in superb blue Morocco to match Madoc, the Cid & Brazil—I have not seen Pasley¹ but will read him on yr. recommendation. I am ever yours

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE, WRITER, MELROSE

[*12th April, 1811*]

MY DEAR [CHARLES],—I had your letter and am much pleased with the prospect of having Mr. Donaldson for my travelling companion on the 21st. We shall take post-horses from Melrose so be with you about half past four.

I have nothing from Mr. Warrender about Agnes Murray or whatever her name is. As she is at liberty she may remain so but I wish you would cause the constables of Galashiels to give a little attention to her movements. I have no idea that without further evidence we shall be able to convict her but the country will expect a trial and indeed the presumptive evidence is very strong.

We will talk of Raeburn² when we meet & I will show you a letter of Willies which I have not yet answered. I must understand him very plainly before I quite trust him.

I am much obliged to you for the lookout you keep for me about land. But Andrew Langs are greatly too near Selkirk. I must be on Tweedside if possible. It is not unlikely that the value of land will fall if the war last as long it necessarily must. There has been too much speculation in that as in other articles for the real capital embarked.

¹ Sir Charles Pasley's *Essay on the Military Policy and Institutions of the British Empire*, pt. i, 1810.

² Willie Scott of Raeburn, who had been writing in distressful terms about his father, his children and his needs.

The Advocate writes me of an Act respecting a Numbering of the people passd 22 March last to be executed under authority of the Sheriffs. I never heard of it before : there will be a copy at Selkirk probably pray get it that we my may look it over together & do the needful. I hope we shall escape the judgement which attended King David on a similar occasion.

I had a letter from A. Baillies father praying her release & promising she should torment the country no more. This will not do—if she will herself petition for banishment from the county I pray you grant it without delay under certification & let the constables see her to the verge of it lest she get drunk & so find her way back again to Selkirk jail—her punishment has been a pretty light one. Yours truly

W SCOTT

EDINR. *Thursday.*

[*Craig-Brown*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 30th April 1811

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I promised I would not write any poetry without letting you know and I make all sort of haste to tell you of my sudden determination to write a sort of a rhapsody upon the affairs of the peninsula. It is to be called the *Vision of Don Roderick* and is founded upon the apparition explanatory of the future events in Spain said to be seen by the last King of the Gothick race in a vault beneath the great church of Toledo. I believe your Ladyship will find something of the story in the Comtesse D'Aunois' travels into Spain¹ but I find it at most length in an old Spanish history of the aforesaid Don Roderick professing to be translated from the Arabic

¹ Marie Catharine La Mothe, Comtesse d'Aulnoy (author of *Les Contes des Fées*) : *La Cour et la Ville de Madrid. Relation de Voyage d'Espagne.* 1691, 1699. •

but being in truth a mere romance of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. It will serve my purpose however *tout de même*. The idea of forming a short lyric piece upon this subject has often glided through my mind but I should never I fear have had the grace to turn it to practice if it were not that groping in my pockets to find some guineas for the suffering Portuguese and detecting very few to spare I thought I could only have recourse to the Apostolic benediction, "Silver and gold have I none but that which I have I will give unto you." My friends and booksellers the Ballantynes of Edinburgh have very liberally promised me a hundred guineas for this trifle which I intend to send to the fund for relieving the sufferers in Portugal. I have come out to this wilderness to write my poem and so soon as it is finished I will send you my dear Lady Marchioness a copy not that it will be worth your acceptance but merely that you may be assured I am doing nothing that I would not you knew of sooner than any one.¹ I intend to write to the Chairman of the Committee by to-morrow's post. I would give them a hundred drops of my blood with the same pleasure would it do them service for my heart is a soldier's and always has been though my lameness rendered me unfit for the profession which old as I am I would rather follow than any other. But these are waking dreams in which I seldom indulge even to my kindest friends.

I have not heard anything from Mr. Dundas. His father wrote him a letter of which he sent me a copy and which is worthy twenty disappointments. It is frank generous and if too warmly partial to me is very honourable to his feelings admitting his judgment to be blinded by personal regard. I have written to Mr. Dundas in hopes to bring this matter to some end or other. They must give Mr. Home a pension in the event of my resignation, and really I see no reason why they should

¹ See letter to Lady Abercorn and note, p. 431.

economize for the state at the expense of my rising family. By diminishing my establishment, devoting my time to letters, selling my library and my house in town and retiring to the country for life I shall be able to make a provision for my young people without dependence on any one. My house is worth £2000 and my library which has been my most expensive hobby-horse worth a great deal more even retaining the more useful books. So that if they choose to prefer any other person to my office I shall only have to regret having spent five years in doing duty for nothing. I have realized some hundreds a year besides my Sherifffdom which is £300 more so that I shall have enough for all the useful and some of the ornamental purposes of income and have the less right to complain of any disappointment.

Adieu my dear friend for deuce take this poem it must be written before it can be read. I beg my kindest respects to your noble friends and am ever your truly obliged

W. S.

When does your Irish journey take place. I must waylay you at Dumfries.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT,—I have indeed been strangely negligent but far from forgetful of you. A variety of little selfish interests arising from some alterations in the state of our body have necessarily occupied a great deal of my time & I need not tell you that calculations solicitations orations perorations & above all prorogations with all the formal classes which terminate in the same combination of the alphabet are woeful enemies to easy and friendly correspondence. The pen dreads the inkstandish and scarcely the various commodities of my new desk which by the way is the most convenient thing in the world could reconcile me to the manual operation

of writing. If thinking and talking of Mrs. Morritt & you would have done the business I think you could hardly have complaind of my ungrateful neglect. But to leave apologies & to speak to business—I hope for his own sake your Captain Payne has more foundation for his military rank than his literary connections. I dont even remember being in company with one of the name but am positive I have never maintaind the least correspondence of any kind with such a person. So there is no occasion for the aristocratic dames of York thawing their frost on my account. One is a little astonishd at these things although they happen so frequently.

I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington and with all the pride of a Seer to boot. I have for three years been proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to. A man of genius and talent, not deterd by obstacles, not fetterd by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession but playing the general and the heroe where most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill Serjeant or at best the adjutant. These campaigns will teach us what we have long needed to know that success depends not on the nice drilling of regiments but upon the grand movements and combinations of an army. We have been hitherto polishing hinges when we should have studied the mechanical union of a huge machine. And our Army begin to see that the *Grand Secret* as the French call it consists only in union joint exertion and concerted movement. This will enable us to meet the dogs on fair terms as to numbers and for the rest “my soul and body on the action both.”

The downfall of Bonapartes military fame will be the signal of his ruin and if we may trust the reports this day brings us from Holland there is glorious mischief on foot already. I hope we shall be able to fling fuel into the flame immediatly. A country with so many dikes and ditches must be fearfully tenable when the peasants are

willing to fight. I should enjoy the disconsolate visages of these Whig dogs these dwellers upon the isthmus, who have been foretelling the rout and ruin which it only required their being in power to have achieved. It is quite plain from Sir Robt. Wilsons account that they neglected to feed the lamp of Russia and it only rested with their want of opportunity that they did not quench the smoking flax in the peninsula—a thought so profligate that those who from party or personal interest indulged it ought to pray for mercy and return thanks for the providential interruption which obstructed their purpose as they would for a meditated but prevented parricide. But enough of the thorny subject of politics.

You are very kind to tell me so much of dear Lady Hood¹ in whose kindly temper and elastic play of spirits all must delight who have the happiness to know her. I am delighted to learn from so good a judge of character & circumstance that she studies the ground on which she has to sustain a sort of perpetual skirmish for what better is the situation of a gay & beautiful female in high life unprotected by her proper guardian. But I trust all will end well for her as her own good warm heart deserves. As to Mrs. Apreece, she is one of those persons who aim at literary acquaintances and the reputation of knowing remarkable characters and seeing out of the way places not for their own value nor for any pleasure she has at the time but because such hearing and seeing & being acquainted gives her a knowing air in the world. If it fixes her in good society verily she has her reward and will not forfeit it by doing any thing silly though I think her *entre nous* a bit of a pretence. She takes a good varnish however and will shew off very well in a London literary party.

¹ A number of letters from Lady Hood to Scott are in the Walpole collection, but I have come on none of his to her. A note in *Familiar Letters* (1894) says "the Seaforth collection of Scott's letters has unfortunately disappeared since Mrs Stewart Mackenzie's death."

I grieve for your loss at Barosa but what more glorious fall could a man select for himself or friend than dying with his sword in hand and the cry of victory in his ears.

As for my own operations they are very trifling though sufficiently miscellaneous. I have been writing a sketch of Bonaparte's tactics for the *Edinr. Register*¹ and some other trumpery of the same kind. Particularly I meditate some wild stanzas referring to the peninsula : if I can lick them into any shape I hope to get something handsome from the Booksellers for the Portugeeze sufferers "Silver and gold have I none but that which I have I will give unto them." My lyric[s] are calld the Vision of Don Roderic. You remember the story of the last Gothic King of Spain descending into an enchanted cavern to know the fate of the Moorish invasion—that is my machinery. Pray do not mention this for some one will snatch up the subject as I have been served before ; and I have not written a line yet. I am going to Ashestiel for eight days to fish and rhyme.

Do you ever see aught of George Ellis ? I made you acquainted and I shall be very angry if you dont cultivate each other. He is a prime support of the Quarterly which is making its way very well. I mentiond your wish to Gifford respecting Clarkes new volumes and I will remind him when I write to him. It is astonishing how closely they are beating up to the Edinburgh in popularity.

Adieu my dear Morritt. Mrs. Scott joins me in the kindest respects to your Lady. Lord Mellville is in town & I expect the honour of a call every moment so I will close my letter that it may be ready for a frank. I never saw the veteran Statesman in better health or spirits than he has shewn this winter. Ever Yours most affectionately

EDINR. 26 April 1811

WALTER SCOTT

[Law]

¹ "Cursory Remarks upon the French Order of Battle particularly in the Campaigns of Buonaparte," *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809 (published 1811).

TO GEORGE THOMSON, TRUSTEES OFFICE, ROYAL EXCHANGE,
EDINBURGH

DEAR SIR,—The preceding page contains a few tawdry stanzas to one of the airs you recommended, which I indited yesterday at Bankhouse on my journey here. The words begin “There was an ancient fair,” and an old newspaper which I found in the inn suggested the application of the tune to the late splendid exploit of our horse near Campo Mayor, for which the burthen is very well adapted.¹ As I intend to send you two songs besides, I think it will be unnecessary to prefix my name to this little rough effusion, which can have no effect unless when sung, and which I have studiously kept thin of poetry in hopes of giving it a martial and popular cast. Let me know if you like the lines, and if you think them quite adapted for so elegant a publication as yours. I will send you the “Bed in the barn” to-morrow or next day at furthest, and remain yours truly

W. S.

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 30 *April* [1811]

[*British Museum*]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

[*April or May* 1811]

MY DEAR MISS CLEPHANE,—I did not embrace your kind offer to send the harp because we expected my friend Miss Scott who lives nearer and proposed sending hers—But both Minstrel and harp have failed us, the former in a fit of the tooth ache and the latter I suppose ringing in sympathy to her distress. Now you know I have a harp of mine own but I have it hung up by S’ Fillans Spring and cannot reach it down at this moment— Now if you

¹ The song is *The Bold Dragoon* (“’Twas a marechal of France and he fain would honour gain,” etc.), with the refrain “Whack, fol de rol,” etc. Printed 1812.

can still send yours over it will be the greatest favour in life except that of using it when it comes. The *mode* how I leave entirely to you but we will take infinite care of the instrument while with us. You wished to hear the Ballantynes so I asked them to look in this evening.

If you can trust the bearer he is a very steady fellow.

W. SCOTT

Tuesday three o'clock.

[*Northampton*]

TO GEORGE THOMSON, TRUSTEES OFFICE, ROYAL EXCHANGE,
EDINBURGH

[Postmark : *May 1811*]

MY DEAR SIR,—I return the song. The lines cannot be better cut down than you have done it yourself, but in the pattern sent there were eight syllables, not six. Observe—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Her	quiz	-	ing	glass	and	dia	-mond ring.

Right by all the rules of Cocker.¹ I only mention this in vindication of my own accuracy, for I counted both the lines and notes. It does not make the least difference in the sense. As to giving a copy, I never had one except that which I sent to you, so that I should be sure to observe your caution. I sent you the “Bed in the Barn” the other day, thinking it was in the greatest hurry. I like the melody of “Chirke Castle” and the stanza very well, but the name *Chirke* is enough to put the whole world’s teeth on edge. I don’t mean to observe any secret about “The Light dragoon,” only it’s not just the sort of thing that one solemnly puts their name to. I

¹ *Cocker’s Arithmetic*, being a plain . . . method . . . for the full understanding of that incomparable art . . . publ. by J. Hawkins . . . and corrected by J. Mair. 120. Glasgow, 1787. (Edin. Univ. Library Catalogue.) First edition, London, 1678.

will send the Minstrelsy to-morrow or next day. Why was it not the minstrelsy of *Kilgarvon* or *Conway*? Yours very truly and hastily,

W. S.

[*British Museum*]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR,—I am distressed and ashamed¹ at the appearance I must have been making in your eyes while you are loading [me] with your unmerited favours. A Mercantile friend undertook many weeks since to send a packet containing a few Books (my own publications) for your acceptance, and I have the mortification to find that they are still lying in his warehouse at Glasgow. Be so good as to let me know how they can be safely sent to you as I am sick of private hands and have written to desire that they may be returned to me without delay. Besides I want to add to them the *Vision of Don Roderick* a short rhapsody which has been suggested by the success of your gallant countryman Lord Wellington and the very favourable state of affairs on the Peninsula.

For three months passed I have not almost had time to look at Swift except in the way of correcting the press. A Colleague in my office died and I had not only all his business to attend to, but the much more fretting and unpleasing task of soliciting corresponding and negotiating to procure if possible the vacant situation to which I might be considered as having some title having done the duty

¹ On 17th April Hartstonge had written to the Ballantynes that at three several dates he had sent to Scott material for the *Life of Swift*, including matter from Theophilus Swift, from Dr. Barnett, from the MS. closet of Trinity College, and from the Lanesborough MSS. He has had no acknowledgment. "Mr. Theophilus Swift has repeatedly promised me to give Mr. Scott all the Materials in his possession." Dr. Tuke has a diary of household expenses in Swift's handwriting, also "a lock of Dean Swift's hair which is completely grey and a lock of Stella's also upon the envelope of which is written in Dean Swift's handwriting 'only a woman's hair.'" All this with other information and a hope that Scott will visit Dublin.

of the office for five years without a guinea of emolument. I have not however been hitherto successful but the object is worth some anxiety and trouble being full £1300 and that joined to my own small fortune would make me very independent indeed. I mention these things to you in confidence because I should not have been satisfied with trusting to the fidelity of my Glasgow friend altho I thought myself safe in doing so, had my own avocations been of a less peremptory and perplexing nature. I believe I shall be the second edition of the Hare with many friends, for you would think all the world would be delighted to assist me just until it was in their power to do me a real and reasonable service.

Had it not been for this sort of engagement I intended myself the pleasure of being in Dublin, during the vacation of our Courts when I should have esteemed myself peculiarly happy in an opportunity of returning my personal thanks to you my dear Sir for the extreme degree of trouble which you have taken in my matters. Indeed it will be entirely owing to you and the revd. Mr. Berwick if I am able to give much that is new or curious in my Edition of your great Patriot. I have made out a whole string of notes upon your Swiftiana which I do not intend now to repeat because it is in the parcel aforesaid and will reach you along with it. To my notes I have added a few Queries which I have to trust to your goodness to excuse. I have been among my own hills for these three weeks past and was quietly tuning my pipes to the aforesaid Vision of Don Roderick when your hue & cry after me was forwarded by the Ballantynes—to be sure I could not have complaind if you had advertised me as the greatest ingrate on the face of the earth and to say truth I had some momentary idea of putting into the papers as a melancholy accident the loss of my fingers by the bursting of a fowling piece as the only rational apology for my ungracious silence. But you will soon be troubled with me far oftener than may be convenient, for I am about

to resume Swift with my whole strength mind and might. I have the pleasure to know your ingenious countryman Mr. Croker very well having often met him in London and being on a very friendly footing with him. His Epigrammatic Pamphlet is really very clever but gives a sad account of your Politics : another of my occupations has been the Annual Register now coming out. I have selected out of your valued collection the adieu to the Prince of the Brasils because it will assort very well [with] my own Don Roderick who is to make his first entree before the Public in the same register. I am very much indebted indeed to Mr. Theo: Swift for his kindness and liberality in permitting me the use of the valuable materials respecting his honoured ancestor but am deeply ashamed of the personal trouble you have taken in transcribing the whole. My eccentric friend Miss White sent me the transcript of the Manuscript notes on Clarendon which are truly Swiftian. I have e'en printed them *ad longum* tho it was a curious task for a Scotchman. Among your other favours let me not omit to thank you for your kind prose invitation and poetical wellcome to Ireland. Perhaps the day may yet come tho removed till Spring 1812 when I may have an opportunity of personally expressing how much I am dear Sir Your obliged humble Servt

WALTER SCOTT

If the Packet can be sent to any of your friends at the Castle whose franks carry unusual weight, I can divide it into two or three Post Parcels. Pray direct to Edinburgh as I leave this cabbın very soon.

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK. 1 May, 1811.

[*Brotherton*]

TO CLARKE WHITEFELD

ASHESTIEL 7 May [1811]¹

DEAR SIR,—I am just favoured with your letter & write in answer to say that I have no thoughts of writing another poem, excepting a sort of thing respecting Spain & Portugal very short, & which as I intend [it] to be almost entirely in the stanza of Spencer could in no shape be adapted for Music. I know my friends & publishers the Messrs. Ballantynes had considerable offers from musical composers for the exclusive privilege of setting from that work, but they declined imposing any restrictions in that particular, as it seemed to them to be stepping out of the ordinary line of their profession, & imposing an unusual restraint upon the gentlemen of yours. If ever I should write another poem, which if I live & have my health I may do perhaps much sooner than I have the slightest idea of at present, I will take care you are early supplied with any part of the words that may seem adapted for music. But as my publishers seem to make a point of honour of not admitting any monopoly I shall of course be unwilling to impose upon them any condition in that particular.

I am just now writing in the Country but when I return to Town which will be next week, I will subjoin McGregor a rua ruagh (pronounced O roro). My friends the Miss Maclean Clephanes will procure it me, who have the largest collection of Highland Music I ever saw written down. I regret Braham should be so capricious, but his talent is unique & that naturally

¹ This letter is dated 7th May without a year but on the 2nd May Clarke had written from Emmanuel Close, Cambridge, announcing that he had "set every song in that delicious Poem," i.e. *The Lady of the Lake*. He hears another poem is on the stocks and says: "Had I the exclusive right of setting the songs (if there are any) I should make a little fortune. . . . I earnestly entreat you will do me the favour of giving this request consideration. . . . Have you got the Melody you told me of 'McGregor Ororo'?"

inspires conceit. I hope this will find Miss Whitfeld continuing better, & I am ever, Dear Sir, Yours truly

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

W SCOTT

TO MISS CLEPHANE

MY DEAR MISS CLEPHANE,—My friend Mr. Weber who takes the trouble of presenting this has promised to make drawings of the Carslogie¹ reliques for yours truly.

W. SCOTT.

It will give Mrs. Scott and me the greatest pleasure my dear Miss Clephane to wait upon you at eight tomorrow evening and I have secured the Ballantini—We will stay till eleven unless you will turn us away sooner. W. S.

[Received at 23 Georges Sq. May 1811]

[*Northampton*]

TO GEORGE THOMSON, ESQ., ROYAL EXCHANGE

MY DEAR SIR,—I assure you it has been very particular and pressing business of my own as well as the necessity of attending the circuit, which have prevented my getting the song ready for you. I go to Ashestiel on Monday when I shall be quite at leisure to fullfill my engagements and I hope to send you one song at least in the course of

¹ Carslogie, an estate with an ancient mansion in Cupar parish, Fife, had been for nearly five hundred years the seat of the Clephanes, a family traced back to Alanus de Claephane, “a considerable figure in the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214).” Major-General William Maclean Douglas Clephane of Carslogie, twenty-first in direct male line, married Marianne, the daughter and only child of Lachlan, the seventh Maclean of Torloisk in Mull (brother of Hector, the sixth in descent). He sold what remained of the Carslogie barony (Scott’s friends are all of Torloisk) and he died in Grenada in 1803 or 1804. His son William succeeded his maternal grandmother in the Torloisk estate. Margaret, as we shall see in 1815, married Spencer Joshua Alwyne, Lord Compton, and later Marquis of Northampton. Anne Jane died unmarried. Scott had been chosen by the family as their guardian, and conducted all the negotiations connected with the marriage. The relics referred to included the famous horn and steel harp. See note, p. 398.

the week and to the tune you wish. I have the Sketch of a little Border tale which I think may answer. Believe me yours very truly

W. S.

EDINR. *Saturday Evening* [May 1811]

[*British Museum*]

TO WILLIAM ERSKINE, ADVOCATE, ALBANY STREET,
EDINBURGH

MY DEAR ERSKINE,—I write to you because I want you to read & because if you do not like to do so you can put the letter in your pocket since it requires no answer. I am truly anxious about Mrs. Erskines situation. Is it not usual in such cases either to get a nurse or to wean the child. I should prefer the latter which for some reasons was Walters case about the same age and you see few stouter boys. But I should fear the perseverance in a duty so exhausting as nursing cannot be good either for the child or mother when the latter is under such distress of mind.

I had a line from your sister which would have brought me to town if I could have hoped you would have complied with her proposal which was that we should visit Killermont together. But your letter assigns too good reasons for remaining in Albany and I only hope you neglect nothing that may tend to soothe or even to distract your feelings. You have much left to care for, many weighty and important duties to yourself your family Society and your friends so you must compel yourself to regular exercise and whatever else is necessary to the support of your health.

Never puzzle yourself about my affairs till we meet. I have written to Mr. R. Dundas & by the time I come to town I shall be surprized if I do not hear from him. I think they use me coldly and unworthily which I feel more than any pecuniary disappointment for “bread we shall eat or white or brown.” I am busy with Don Rodericke & I hope by the time it is finishd your spirits will be sufficient

to go over it with me before it goes to press which it must not do without your imprimatur. It is all in the Spenserian stanza principally with the view of propitiating you.

I am almost glad you are not here. Nothing but everlasting rain hail and easterly blights & no walking without being wet to the skin and gaining a good headache for the day from the severity of the damp and cold. Yet my retreat has been very useful as I have finishd much which might have been endless under the interruptions of Edinburgh.

Adieu my dear Erskine. Mrs. Scott joins in cordial wishes to Mrs. Erskine of whose health I hope to get a good account on Monday evening when I shall call on you as we shall be in town at Dinner on that day. Do not labour too hard but take care of yourself for the sake of all whom you love & who love you including Your affectionate friend

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Wednesday May 8, 1811*

[*Miss Erskine*]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

Postmark May 10, 1811

DEAR SIR,—I am not sorry Lord Langley does not answer, for I am certain I can make a pretty tale of it by taking it out of its strait jacket. I believe you will find few if any lines in it which exceed seven syllables, which was all I looked to or really understand anything about. It is impossible for me to attempt this tune again, not having any idea of what words would suit it, and being moreover, incompetent to anything requiring liveliness or jollity. I have not a particle of poetical humour in my composition. A military or romantic song I may get at, but there I stop. I will therefore far rather try the Highland air,¹ and as I shall be in town on Monday, when

¹“Lord Balgownie’s Favourite”—Thomson notes. To this air Thomson then set Burns’s “Again rejoicing Nature sees,” etc.—*Thomson’s Melodies*, vol. 4, p. 10 (1822).

I can have the advantage of hearing you sing it, I will be in less danger of repeating my errors.

I am very sorry for your disappointment, and willing to do my best to repair but you are sensible you have only my eyes to trust to ; ears *au fait de musique* I have none.
I remain very much yours
W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Wednesday*

George Thomson Esq

A. Ballantyne's Esq Trustees Office

Royal Exchange Edinburgh

[*British Museum*]

To JAMES BALLANTYNE

MY DEAR JAMES,—I received your letter this morning and will attend to all that it contains : the *jar* shall be discarded and the other lesser particulars reformed.¹ I am not so clear about omitting the stanza you object to though perhaps I can mend it. A great deal of the poem is finishd at least in *dead* colours as the painters say for it wants much touching. My attention has been a little dissipated by considering a plan for my own future comfort which I hasten to mention to you.

My lease of Ashestiel is out and I now sit a tenant at will under a heavy rent and at all the inconveniences of one who is in the house of another. I have therefore resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage & a few fields. There are two pieces either of which would suit me but both would make a very desirable property indeed. They stretch along the Tweed near half way between Melrose and Selkirk on

¹ The opening lines of *Don Roderick* run :

Lives there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire
May rise distinguished o'er the din of war ;
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre,
Who sung beleaguer'd Ilion's evil star ?

In the MS. the last line runs :

Who sung the changes of the Phrygian jar.

the opposite side from Lord Somerville & could be had for between £7000,, & £8000,, or either of them separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of purchasing one or both and I must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the difficulty which John might find in advancing so large a sum as the copy-right of a new poem supposing it to be made payable in the course of a year at farthest from the work going to press would be essential to my purpose. Yet the Lady of the Lake came soon home. I have a letter this morning from Mr. Dundas giving me good hope of my treasury business being carried through ; if this appointment take place I will buy both the little farms which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of Tweed above Gala-foot, if not I will confine my purchase to one. As my income in the event supposd will be very considerable it will afford a sinking fund to clear off what debt I may incur in making the purchase. It is proper John & you should be as soon as possible apprised of these my intentions which I believe you will think reasonable in my situation & at my age while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a tree of my own planting. I shall not I think want any pecuniary assistance beyond what I have noticed but of course my powers of rendering it will be considerably limited for a time. I hope the Register will give a start to its predecessor. I assure you I shall spare no pains. To recur to the 4th Stanza—were you not aware that Wales i.e. the country retained by the British included the South-west of Scotland as far as the firth of Clyde untill the reign of Malcolm Canmore when the last King of the Strath Clyde Britons became extinct. Merlin is buried near Peebles & gives name to the parish where he lies. Llywarch's battles were almost all fought upon the border, & so late as the time of Froissart Jedburgh & Carlisle are calld cities in *Wales*, so is Stow upon Gala-water, where the celebrated Arthur is said to have founded

a church. Nay an you catch me napping on my geography I will give you my head for the washing. But a short note may be necessary.

John must bend his earnest attention to clearing his hands of the Quire Stock and to taking in as little as he can unless in the way of exchange—in short of reefing our sails which are at present too much spread for our ballast. He must in future forbear *ordering* out of catalogues as much as possible. It is always a poor trade and sometimes a dangerous one.

I have his letter acquainting me with the change in Constable's firm¹— No association of the kind Mr. C. proposes will stand two years with him for its head. His temper is too haughty to bear with the complaints and to answer all the minute enquiries which partners of that sort think themselves entitled to make & expect to have answered. Their first onset will however be terrible & John must be prepared to lie bye and not play the *frog* in the fable by affecting rivalry. Give them cable and they will bring themselves up. Campbell¹ & Caddell are neither of them men that will willingly lie out of interest as Hunter was forced to do. In short as Durandarte says "patience Cousin & shuffle the cards."

Having so very many things to talk of I wish you would meet me at Johns on Monday between three & four o'clock as I will stop there on my return from this place.

Yours truly

W SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 12 May 1811

The new poem would help the presses.

Pray have the goodness to send to the Post Office that my letters may be sent to Castle Street. This is of some consequence.

[Glen]

¹ Early in 1811 Hunter retired from his partnership with Constable, who assumed as partners Robert Cathcart and Robert Cadell. The former died in 1812. Campbell is apparently a slip of Scott's pen for Cathcart.

TO LADY ABERCORN

[Extract]

I do not know any thing of a play of mine my dear friend unless it be a sort of half-mad German tragedy which I wrote many years ago when my taste was very green and when like the rest of the world I was taken in with the bombast of Schiller.¹ I never set the least value upon it and as I gave copies to one or two people who asked for them I am not surprized it should have risen up in judgement against me though its resurrection has been delayed so many years. I happen fortunately to have a clean copy of which I entreat your acceptance. The story of the Invisible Tribunal on which it is founded is probably familiar to your Ladyship. A very good little German romance entitled *Hermann of Unna* is founded upon it and was translated about the time I employed myself in this idle task. The only tolerable scene is that between the mother and son which I think would have a dramatic effect.

I long to know when your motions are fixed. My wife will accompany me to Dumfries as she is very desirous to have an opportunity however awkward to have the honour of thanking you for all your kindness. She is engaged in copying the *Vision of Don Roderick* as fast as I copy it out for press in order that your Ladyship may be possessed of it so soon as it is finished. It is all in the Stanza of Spenser to which I am very partial. The Booksellers intend first to publish a limited impression in Quarto & then to put it into the Edinburgh Annual Register to which I have made some other little contributions.

I am about a grand and interesting scheme at present—no less than the purchase of a small property delight-

¹ [*The House of Aspen*] “executed nearly thirty years since, when the magnificent works of Goethe and Schiller were for the first time made known to the British public,” etc.—*Advertisement*, 1st April 1829.

fully situated on the side of the Tweed my native river. The worst is there are few trees and those all young. I intend to build a beautiful little cottage upon the spot which will either be my temporary or constant residence, as Mr. Arbuthnot succeeds or fails in his kind exertions on my behalf. I am sure I cannot be sufficiently grateful to him or the kind friend who interested him in my fortune. I have a letter from Mr. R. Dundas who pleads his journey to Scotland as a cause of delay and seems pretty confident of bringing matters to a favourable conclusion. Am I not a good philosopher to write verses when I have £1300 a year trembling in the scale? But how could I help myself by being anxious. I suppose Mr. Arbuthnott will continue to forward your Ladyship packets when you go to Ireland. Believe me Dear Lady Marchioness ever your truly obliged & grateful

EDINBURGH 17 May [1811]

W. S.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

[Postmarked 23rd May 1811]

MY DEAR MADAM,—We are deprivd of the prospect of waiting upon you on the Birthday by the confusion into which the business of this Court is thrown by the most unexpected and irreparable loss which it has sustained in the death of the President.¹ It is scarcely

¹“As I was going along Maitland Street on the evening of the 20th of May 1811, I met Sir Harry Moncreiff, who asked me with agitation if I had heard what had happened. He then told me that President Blair was dead. He had been in the Court that day, apparently in good health, and had gone to take his usual walk from his house in George Square round by Bruntsfield Links and the Grange, where his solitary figure had long been a known and respected object, when he was struck with sudden illness, staggered home, and died.

“It overwhelmed us all. Party made no division about Blair. All pleasure and all business were suspended. . . . The day before the funeral

possible to conceive a calamity which is more universally or will be so long felt by the country. His integrity and legal knowledge joined to a peculiar dignity of thought action and expression had begun to establish in the minds of the public at large that confidence in the regular and solemn administration of justice which is so necessary to its usefulness and respectability. My official situation as well as the private intimacy of our families makes me a sincere mourner on this melancholy occasion for I feel a severe personal deprivation besides the general share of sorrow common to all of every party or description who were in the way of witnessing his conduct. He was a rare instance of a man whose habits were every way averse to the cultivation of popularity rising nevertheless to the highest point in the public opinion by the manly and dignified discharge of his duty. I have been really so much shocked and out of spirits yesterday and the day preceding that I can write and think of nothing else.

I have to send you the *Vision of Don Roderic* so soon as we can get it out. It is a trifle I have written to eke out the subscription for the suffering Portuguese.

Mrs. Scott desires her kindest compliments to you and the young people. I suppose Mr. Scott is returned or upon the point of returning.

Believe me my dear Mrs. Scott ever yours most truly & respectfully

WALTER SCOTT

I desired the servant at Ashestiel to bring down the filly & her mama as the Mertoun grass will be better than ours

another unlooked-for occurrence deepened the solemnity. The first Lord Melville had retired to rest in his usual health, but was found dead in bed next morning. These two early, attached, and illustrious friends were thus lying, suddenly dead, with but a wall between them. Their houses, on the north-east side of George Square, were next each other."—LORD COCKBURN, *Memorials of his Time*.

Blair was the son of the poet of *The Grave*. He had been President since 1808. Of him, John Clerk, whose argument he had demolished, murmured, "Eh, man! God Almighty spared nae pains when he made your brains."

at this season which is important for the foal. I hope the filly will turn well out as she looks very promising at present.

[*Polwarth*]

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE

[*May-June 1811*]

DEAR JOHN,—The Entail¹ is in Walpoles Works & only requires to be copied out. I forget the volume but you will easily find it out as the poetry is not extensive.

I think I have a scheme for the Vision of Don Roderick but reserve it till meeting. It is coming on apace thanks to bad weather only.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The calamity which has befallen our Courts of Justice and Scotland in general, by the sudden death of our Lord President renders it impossible for me to be at Dumfries on the 27th agreeably to my intention as we are all thrown into great confusion by so cruel a loss. I have God knows my own peculiar share in this general misfortune for both in my official intercourse and in private life I lived upon the best and most intimate footing with the great judge we have lost. There never was a more general sorrow extending over all classes and parties of men. He was a rare instance of a man who attained universal popularity by the discharge of his duty although he scorned to court it by any of the usual arts. And I do not believe that high and scrupulous integrity, extent of legal knowledge and that dignified demeanour so necessary to support the credit of a Court of Justice ever met so happily in a person of his eminent station. He had not been at the head of our law above two years, just long enough to

¹ See letter to Lady Anne Hamilton, 17th January 1802.

shew that [the conduct] we all admired was no extraordinary exertion in consequence of his promotion but the steady and uniform tenor of his conduct. He was not ill above half an hour and I had parted with him the day before in great health and spirits after much laughing at some nonsense or other—but such is our precarious tenure—I forget, my dear friend that you probably did not know this excellent man but as a dear friend of mine and an irreparable and unspeakable loss to Scotland I am sure you will regret our loss of him.

Mrs. Scott has made a copy for your Ladyship of the *Vision of Don Roderic* so far as it is corrected for the press. There are about 20 verses more but I have not since this shock had spirits enough to correct them. There are probably many errors both of the pen & poet in Mrs. Scott's copy. I put the poem up with a finely printed Copy of the *Castle of Otranto* which was printed by the Ballantynes here & to which at their request I wrote a hasty sort of a preface, so I made them give me a copy for your kind acceptance.¹

I sent under Mr. Arbuthnott's cover a copy of the play your Ladyship enquired about although it certainly is a very foolish performance. But I fancy you must have set out before it could reach London. Mr. Arbuthnott will probably forward it.

I have directed the packet with the book and poem to the care of the postmaster at Dumfries who of course will give it to your Ladyships servant.

Our poor president is to be interd on Wednesday at which last duty I must be present—

I have heard nothing from R. Dundas excepting that my matters were interrupted by his going to Scotland & that he expected to resume them with hopes of good

¹ A copy of this 1811 edition is in the *Rosebery Collection* in the National Library of Scotland. On the fly-leaf are inscribed: "H. Macdonald Buchanan, 1817," and below is this brief note in Scott's hand: "The introduction to this book was written by W. Scott and the frontispiece was drawn by Daniel Terry of Covent Garden Theatre. W. Scott, 29th December 1813."

success. I will apprise you my dear friend of the issue so soon as I learn it. My respectful Compliments attend the Marquis & family. I am ever Your Ladyships truly obliged & grateful
W. S.

EDINR. 25th May [1811]

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

MY DEAR CHARLES,—You will see by the enclosed that Peel has nearly made a bargain for me with Doctor Douglas for his land on Tweedside.¹

1

PEEL 1 June 1811

DEAR SIR,—I went to the Doctor this day. I asked if he meant to sell his Land he said he did, I wanted to know the number of Acres ; 110—13 of Which is planted, this I have from the plan and measurement which he showed me, Next question the rent £120 or 125 I asked how him and his Tennant stood should he sell, answer, that he and him has a clause in there agreement that if the Dr. sells he is to flitt and remove,—As I found every thing clear I then asked the price which he said was Four Thousand Guineas, after some more conversation which I refer to meeting, I told him I would give him £4000 he said he would take no less, I asked him 14 days to advise on it to which he granted,—If you are pleased with these terms I will close a bargain for you at the time fixed—Dr. wants £1500 at the time of entry Whs. 1812 and what remains may continue on the Land if desired—I am apt to think you will be a Tweedside Laird, but Mrs. L. and me will be sorry sorry to part with Mrs. Scott ; you ; and your dear Children for neighbours—

If you still think of a carriage horse the Doctor has one 4 years old near 16 hands or about 62 inches high and marked much like your horses, he is going to sell him and asked what I thought he should have for him I told him I thought he was worth £47 his price the Dr. says is £50 I do not think he is asking too much for him him even for a Carriers cart,—

I delivered the Stock of Ashestiel on the 27 May to Mr. Pringle and his new Tennant, Notwithstanding my remonstrances Mr. Pringle would leave a blank in the submission when the price was to be fixed by the Arbitrators (or to them fixing a day) to this the Arbitrators would not agree ; but so soon as Mr. Pringle and me agreed on a day they would fix the price of the sheep immediatly—Mr. Pringle will not allow the price to be fixed till Lammas ; and I insist on it being fixed the day when the stock was delivered and bill and caution should be granted agreeable to the Tack,—Mr. Pringle asked to Wednesday next to advise, and if we do not agree which I very much suspect, I will most likely pay you a visit on Thursday or Friday next for your advise and counsel I am Dear Sir Your very Humbl. Sevt.

[EDINBURGH]

ROBERT LAIDLAW

As the situation and terms in every respect suit me I have no hesitation in writing to Mr. Laidlaw that I shall close with the Doctor on the terms he proposes supposing the title to be correct. I beg the favour that you will consult with Peel about closing the matter directly with the Doctor by Missives. My plan is to make the present farm-house do by dint of crowding for next season & to set about a handsome cottage.

My change of situation dear Charles is like to occasion you a little trouble for I am so helpless in every thing respecting farming that I must trust to your goodness as I have done hitherto to Mr. Laidlaws to give a look to my matters as you ride past to Selkirk which I hope will not be very inconvenient. There is a farm immediately east of the Drs. which will be one day in the market when I hope I may compass it. The two will make as the advertisements say a very desirable property. I am quite tired of the plague of repairs rise of rent &c at Ashestiel & as I am offered 3000 guineas for a new poem I can easily fetch myself home for additional expence. Yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

2 June 1811

[Curle]

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS

MY DEAR DUNDAS,—I cannot think of your leaving Edinburgh without my expressing in the way least intrusive to you and least painful to us both the deep and acute share which I take in the recent calamity which has so suddenly and under such awful circumstances deprived you of a most affectionate father me of a kind and efficient friend who honoured me with a far greater share of his regard than I deserved and our Country of a patriot whose like she will probably not see for a century to come. The inevitable law of nature, that sad reflection

humana perpassi sumus supplies the only consolation that so grievous a dispensation will admit of: unless we should add to it the reflection that our departed friend was removed in the full enjoyment of his admirable faculties & without any painful interval of bodily complaint. In common cases indeed the twilight of the understanding and decay of the frame which often precedes the close of existence may be considered as a preparation to wean the sufferer himself from the love of life & to prepare his friends for his removal from among them. But who could have wished that to save ourselves the suddenness of this most unexpected blow Lord Melvilles noble intellect should have lost the least of its brilliant acuteness or that he should have been even for the shortest space subjected to pain or even to the necessity of inactivity. It is thus I endeavour to reconcile myself to a mode of dissolution which within so short a space has deprived [me] of two friends whom I honoured more than any which remain behind, since their kindness to my youth & friendship since my more advanced age render my regret for their loss almost filial.

I do not ask you to forgive this intrusion which I have purposely delayed till I understand you are about to leave Edinburgh. We shall meet in happier times and correspond upon pleasanter subjects. The world is before us both & while you in the discharge of your important duties will I am sure always remember the example of such a father it shall be my prayer to God that in my very subordinate walk I shall never be found altogether [undeserving] of the regard with which Lord Melville honoured me. An affectionate adieu & Gods blessing with you.

WALTER SCOTT

[7th June, 1811]

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO PATRICK MURRAY

MY DEAR MURRAY,—I am truly grieved at the issue of —s affair— . . .

We have had enough of distress lately from the loss of characters eminent by their situation and talents, & I assure you I sympathized deeply in that which by near relationship must have been so severe & unexpected a stroke to Mrs. Murray & you. The loss of the President & Lord Melville so closely following upon each other affected my spirits very much, & effectually interrupted for a time a little poetical attempt which I was making for behoof of the Portuguese sufferers. I hope however soon to send it to you, as I shall have a few separate copies for my friends.¹ The same reason has prevented my being sufficiently attentive to get the separate copies of our tactical essay. I will make enquiry about them today. Perhaps if they are generally approved of, the remarks may be extended into a small pamphlet : the late events seem to me to furnish much illustration of the doctrine of reserves, for it is very edifying to see how each party supported by repeated reinforcements their position in the village of Fuentes d'Onore.

I hope we are now about to reap in the Peninsula the fruits due to bravery & perseverance, and if we do not take fright, or what is worse, *starve* the business, I firmly believe Bonaparte will find the grave of his glory there.

There is now strong talk of raising an Anglo-Spanish army in our pay, which I suppose may be increased to almost any given numbers.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest remembrances to Mrs. Murray & I am ever very truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 8 June 1811

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

¹ Murray acknowledges receipt of the poem on 7th July, writing from Meigle."

TO ARCHIBALD PARK

N.D.

DEAR SIR,—I have great pleasure in sending you the inclosed. I would like much to write by tomorrow's post to Mr. Earle but it will be necessary I am able to say to him which of the situations you incline to prefer as you see they are both at your option. Will you let me know any time tomorrow your choice on the subject & I will write to Mr. Earle by the Selkirk post. If you come here either at breakfast time, $\frac{1}{2}$ past nine o'clock or at 4 o'clock you will find me at home & finish the business.

Yours &c

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL¹ *Thursday.*[*British Museum*]

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,—I beg your acceptance of a little poem for which I claim applause for the intention though not for the execution. If you have not time for such vagaries yourself pray send it to Lady Mellville with my kind compliments.

In civility and considering how much your time is occupied I should stop here but I cannot help expressing some anxiety to know how Mr. Homes application in Treasury is likely to be disposed of not having heard anything upon the subject for some time. Perhaps it may be right to mention to Mr. Percival that the public cannot in any shape be burthend by the grant of superannuation to Mr. Home because it is in the first instance to be allocated upon the Fee-fund which affords a surplus more than sufficient to discharge it.

¹ The address "Ashestiel" places this letter before 1812, but how much earlier it should come I cannot say. Archibald Park, brother of the traveller, was in 1804 tenant of a large farm on the Duke of Buccleuch's estate and introduced his brother to Scott. In a letter of 26th December 1816 Scott describes him to Miss Clephane as one who "had been for many a day the companion of my mountain sports when I was at Ashestiel." There it appears that through the failure of a third brother he was ruined and sought a post in the Customs, and in 1816 he goes to Mull as a collector at Tobermory, and we hear of him in the letters of 1816-7.

I have bought the little Tweedside farm I wrote to your Lordship about—whether for a temporary retreat or a constant place of residence the success or failure of this application must determine. I am therefore a little feverish about it. We are all in gaping expectation of the new appointments. I have the honour to be ever My dear Lord Your obliged & faithful humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 30 *June* 1811.

I inclose a poem of considerable merit¹ in the subject of which your Lordship is too deeply interested. The author as I hear is a young Kirkman of the name of Buchanan tutor in Lord Wemyss family.

The Right Honble
Lord Mellville etc etc etc

[*Nat. Lib. Scot.*]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

[*July* 1811]

MY DEAR MISS CLEPHANE,—I am fortunate in being able to request your acceptance of the *Orpheus Caledonius*² now a rare book and which has some of the most original sets of our old Scotch songs. You may believe I am highly gratified by Mrs. Clephane and your approbation of Don Roderick who now with characteristick Spanish gravity and tardiness draws to a conclusion. I hope to send you a copy in the end of the week I have ordered a small set for my friends not to interfere with the purpose of the publication. But Mr. Ballantyne promises they are to be very handsome.

Pray tell Mrs. C. I know nothing of Sir W. W. Wynne

¹ On the death of Lord Melville. Scott is now writing to the second lord. By "Kirkman" he means a clergyman.

² *Orpheus Caledonius*, 1725-6, second enlarged edition, 2 vols., 1733: a collection made by a William Thomson of Scottish, or what claimed to be Scottish, songs and airs.

the welch G— amighty. I know his brother Charles a little bit, but none of the rest of the family.

I hope you are not so desperate in your intentions “ the lovely isle again to see ” as you threatend when we last met. Kind compliments to Mother and Sister and believe me very faithfully and respectfully Your affectionate friend

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. *Monday.*

Do you know I have made a discovery of a likeness which tormented me from a wavering uncertainty of recollection since I have the pleasure of knowing you. It is the very decided resemblance of your profile to a Greek coin of Minerva. This would be in many instances an unfortunate discovery since the outward resemblance might impose all the painful duties of prudence and talent necessary to sustain the character. But I mention it to you without fear of inconvenience as I know you can play the part without effort.

I had to reclaim Orpheus not quite from the Shades but something like it or I would have answered your kind note sooner.

[*Northampton*]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

EDINBURGH, *July* [1811]

AFTER repeated trials, I can make nothing of “ Chirke Castle ” that would be in the least satisfactory. The recurrence of the eternal double rhymes and the short structure of the verse renders it unfit (at least in my hands) for anything very pretty, and I am really more jealous of these little things than of long poems. I am much better pleased with “ Glencoe,” which I have finished in the rough. The death of the two great men who made part of the social company at Mr. Wauchope’s the last time we met has broken two strings of my heart. I will send you “ Glencoe ” the instant I have got this damned

Spaniard, whose national sloth is infectious, out of my hands. He is now almost finished.

[*Hadden's George Thomson*]

TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT—I have this moment got your kind letter just as I was packing up Don Roderick for you—a flying copy which be [*sic*] the assistance of an office frank will reach you far sooner than Murrays heavy *quarto*. This patriotic puppetshow has been finishd under wretched auspices—poor Lord Mellvilles death so quickly succeeding that of presidt. Blair one of the best and wisest judges that ever distributed justice broke my spirit sadly. My official situation placed me in daily contact with the President and his ability and candour were the source of my daily admiration. As for poor dear Lord Mellville

'Tis vain to name him whom we mourn in vain.

Almost the last time I saw him he was talking of you in the highest terms of regard and expressing great hopes of again seeing you at Dunira this summer where I proposed to attend you. Hei mihi ! quid hei mihi ! humana perpessi sumus ! His loss will be long and severely felt here and envy is already paying her cold tribute of applause to the worth which she malignd while it walkd upon earth.

There was a very odd coincidence between the deaths of these eminent characters, and that of a very inferior person a dentist of this city named Dubuisson.¹ He met the Presidt. the day before his death, who used a particular expression in speaking to him—the day before Lord Mellville died he also met Dubuisson nearly on the same spot and to the man's surprize used the Presidts. very words in saluting him. On this second death, he expressd (jocularly however) an apprehension that he himself would be the third—was taken ill and died in an hours space. Was not this remarkable ?

¹ John Du Bisson, surgeon-dentist, 13 South St. Andrew Street.—*Edinburgh Directory* (1809-10). Scott spells "Dubuisson."

I am quite delighted with your account of your journey¹ and would be most happy if I could promise myself the pleasure of seeing you in Yorkshire this season. But as the French Ambassador told the King wishing to show that he understood the vernacular idiom and familiar turn of the English language, "I have got some fish to fry." You must know that my lease of Ashestiel being expired I have bought a small farm value about £150 yearly with the intention of "bigging myself a bower" after my own fashion. The situation is good as it lies along the Tweed about three miles above Melrose but alas! the plantations are very young. However I think if I can get an elegant plan for a cottage it will look very well, and furnish me amusement for some time before I get every thing laid out to my mind. We stay at Ashestiel this season, but migrate the next to our new settlements. I have only fixd upon two points respecting my intended cottage one is that it shall stand in my garden or rather kail yard—the other that the little drawing room shall open into a little conservatory in which conservatory there shall be a fountain—these are articles of taste which I have long determined upon. But I hope before a stone of our paradise is begun we shall meet and colloque about it. I believe I must be obliged to my English friends for a few good acorns as I intend to sow a bank instead of planting it and we do not get them good here.

I will write to you again very soon being now busied in bundling off my presentation copies of Don Roderic. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Morritt our little folk are all indebted to your kind remembrance, and I am ever yours,

W. S.

EDINR. 1 *July* [1811]

[*Law*]

¹ Morritt had visited an unfinished house of Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry (1730-1803), whom he had known in Italy and of whom he gives some lurid details.

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—Accept Don Roderic & let charity which hides a multitude of sins throw a corner of her mantle over the poetical blunders of the doughty Spaniard. Report says that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire has actually bought that pleasant farm lately belonging to the worthy Dr. Douglas of Galashiels and that he intends to build a bower there next summer. We hear one of his principal motives in making this large purchase was to draw a little nearer his kind and beloved friends at Mertoun. I have nothing to add to this Gossip except that the House which Jack built will sink in comparaisou to the cottage which is to be built—of all which I hope we will have an early opportunity of talking since we set out for Ashestiel on the 12 Current or next day at farthest. My best compliments to Mr. Scott & the little folks & I am ever Dear Mrs. Scott Yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 2 *July* 1811.

[*Polwarth*]

TO PATRICK MURRAY

[*July* 1811]

MY DEAR MURRAY,—I send you a copy of my Vision—a Rhodomontade piece of goods it is, but you know poets are entitled to be a little ecstatic upon good news. I am desirous to get a copy out to Adam Fergusson and shall make an effort through the War Office. Poor fellow he has been unlucky in being out of the way when so much good fighting was going, yet perhaps fortunate in escaping the Polish pikemen. I think it would appear all these butcherly villains have been cut off; why then rejoice therefore! My kind compliments attend Mrs. Murray and believe me ever truly yours

W. SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH¹

SIR,—I am honoured with your hospitable invitation to Edgeworthstown which adds to the regret I feel in not having been able to atchieve my intended journey to Ireland as nothing would give me more pleasure than an opportunity of returning thanks to Mr. and Miss Edgeworth for the peculiar pleasure which I have received from their very amusing and interesting publications. I will not affect to bandy compliments about the honours you offer me as a minstrel it is sufficient that you think me worthy of any attention in that character and I assure you I shall value my rhimes more highly in the hopes your approbation was sincere. As for the thorny wreath of the Reviewer I beg leave utterly to decline the painful honours having never adventured in that sort of composition above a few antiquarian articles very harmless and very stupid I am the more anxious to mention this because Fame I have heard has done me the dishonour to attribute to me a very silly and impertinent review of Miss Edgeworths *Tales of fashionable Life* which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*. I know only one motive I could have for venting my revenge on such a work in such a manner and that is the soreness of my sides for several days after I read the Irish journey in the inimitable tale of *Ennui*. Perhaps this idle rumour has never reachd you but if it should I trust Miss Edgeworth did not believe it. It will give me great pride and pleasure to feel myself authorized to pay my respects at Edgeworthstown should

¹ Scott probably owed the letter from Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), to which he here replies, to Miss Seward, for the novelist's didactic father was a friend of her and the great Dr. Darwin and Thomas Day. Scott's own correspondence with Maria begins later, when we shall find her asking for the letter, written by Richard Lovell in 1812 to Scott, defending Dr. Darwin against some charges brought by Miss Seward. The letter is printed in her continuation of her father's *Memoirs*. Scott and she corresponded thereafter and he visited Edgeworthstown in 1825, having made her acquaintance personally on her visit to Edinburgh in 1823.

I ever visit Ireland and I beg you will not allow any member of your family or connected with it by friendship to visit our Northern Metropolis without giving me a right to offer them any civilities in my powers.

I have been reading with infinite delight the Cottage Dialogues and the notes.¹ But I am surprized to find most of your Iricisms (many many of them at least) are familiar Scoticismms. This emboldens me to exercise my aforesaid vocation as an Antiquarian Critic and challenge the derivation of Kemp (applied to the spinning matches) as said to be derived from a Camp or tents. It is an old Saxon word for strife and gives rise to our modern *champion* the *Kiempe*² of Germany and the Kemperie man or Kempe of our old romance. Vide the curious ballad of King Estmere in Percys Reliques of ancient poetry. Many of the matches in which our Scottish labourers strive against each other, particularly [*sic*] those which the reapers undertake are popularly calld Kemping matches and the contending parties are said to *kemp*, although tents must be out of the question from the nature of the contention.

Excuse this little trait of the rusty antiquary and believe me Sir your obliged humble servant WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 2 July [1811]

[Butler]

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

[No date]

MY DEAR MISTRESS SCOTT,—I take the opportunity of greeting you by the Messenger who comes to reclaim Lady Wallace (your quadruped pensioner) whose filly I suppose can now more than dispense with her services.

¹ Leadbeater, Mary: *Cottage Dialogues among the Irish Peasantry*. With notes and a preface by Maria Edgeworth, &c. 1811-13. For Mary Leadbeater see note, p. 462.

² The form given is Danish. The "i" is a correction. Scott had probably written Kaempe, which would have been correct.

I hope James Stewart will handle the filly often & use him to see and receive kindness from men which makes the training of that breed of ponies the easiest thing in the world.

I am truly glad that you like Don Roderic but I am now dreaming of nothing but cottages upon Tweedside. If I escape being declared crazy for my various projects I shall be anxious to have the advantage of your taste. I left all our lawyers about a fortnight ago agape at the immaculate trio Sir Francis Citizen Scott & my Lady Oxford.¹ It is truly pleasant to escape to the birches & alders after such discussions. I hope you think of coming up Tweed while days are long and skies somewhat clear. Charlotte & Anne will be delighted to see any of

¹ For the details of this spicy bit of gossip see the letter to Lady Abercorn of 25th July, pp. 520-21, and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's letter of "London, Sunday, —, 1811, to Lady Charlotte Bury."—*Diary illustrative of the Times of George IV.*, i. 118.

"You flatter me greatly by desiring a second number of the gazette extraordinary, which I hasten to transmit, albeit the adventures of Lady O[xford] and her brother are now what is termed in Scotland, Piper's news. . . . Lady O., poor Lady O. knows the rules of prudence, I fear me, as imperfectly as she doth those of the Greek and Latin grammars; or she hath let her brother, who is a sad swine, become master of her secrets, and then contrived to quarrel with him. You would see the outline of the mélange in the newspapers, but not the report that Mr. S. is about to publish a pamphlet as an addition to the Harleian Tracts setting forth the amatory adventures of his sister. We shall break our necks in haste to buy it, of course crying 'shameful' all the while; and it is said that Lady O. is to be cut, which I cannot entirely believe. Let her tell two or three old women about town that they are young and handsome, and give some well-timed parties, and she may still keep the society which she hath been used to, &c." Lady Oxford was the daughter of the Reverend James Scott. She was *not* cut, and shortly after this was engaged in an amour with Lord Byron and helping him to get rid of Lady Caroline Lamb.

"Even now the autumnal charms of Lady — are remembered by me with more than admiration. She resembled a landscape by Claude Lorrain, with a setting sun, her beauties enhanced by the knowledge that they were shedding their last dying beams. . . . A woman is only grateful for her first and last conquest. The first of poor Lady O's was achieved before I entered on this world of care; but the *last* I do think, was reserved for me and a *bonne bouche* it was . . . she had been sacrificed almost before she was a woman to one whose mind and body were equally contemptible in the scale of creation."—*Conversations with Lady Blessington*. It was part of the price Scott had to pay for his indulgence in "good society" that he had, like Sharpe, to circulate such gossip.

their kind Xmas cousins that you will admit into the party— Kind compliments to Mr. Scott. I am now a compleat convert to his opinion about bullion as the Roxburghshire & Merse Lairds are to his railway. Mrs. Scott desires her best respects & I am ever Dear Madam Your truly honourd & faithful

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Wednesday evening*

[*Polwarth*]

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY¹

EDINBURGH, *July 2, 1811.*

MY DEAR HAYLEY,—I have not yet thanked you for your kind and valued recollection of me in the acceptable present of a copy of your plays, because I was then in the very agonies of bringing forth the enclosed Drum and Trumpet performance, which I sent to the press sheet by sheet as fast as it was written. The death of two eminent public characters interrupted my task not a little, and took from me for some time all power of proceeding with it. I was intimately acquainted with both, and in frequent intercourse both familiarly and in the way of public business. We shall not soon see two such men in Scotland, to the welfare of which country they were devotedly attached.

I am just now setting about a task in which I wish I had some of your good taste to assist me. I mean building myself a cottage, or, in the language of romance,

¹ William Hayley (1745-1821), the author of *Triumphs of Temper* (1781), the patron of Blake at Felpham, the biographer of Milton (1794), of Cowper (1803), and of Romney (1809), had probably sent to Scott his *Three Plays with a Preface*, Chichester, 1811. In his reply to this letter (*Walpole Collection*) Hayley comments on "the unhappy and alas! the malignant Anna Seward," who in the letters recently published had commented on the relations between Hayley and his wife, and hinted at his gallantries. He sends a sketch "of the whimsical structure that I formed in this marine village as a sort of Halcyon nest for old age," chiefly to warn Scott not to make the stable "*adjoining to your House.*"

a *bower* upon Tweedside. The situation has a pastoral character, but it is not of a romantic or beautiful description. As the little property lies half a mile along the banks of a bold and rapid river, I hope I shall find a good place for my proposed hut. Can you direct me to any good plan for such a cottage? I know you are distinguished for good taste in rural affairs as well as in literature. Two things I have determined: one is to have my little garden (having no pretension to fruit walls) close to the house, and entering from it like some of your beautiful old rectories; the other is to have the offices adjoining to the house, for you must know I like to spend time in

Twisting of collars my dogs to hold,
And combing the mane of my palfrey bold.

Besides, as my boys, according to the habit of the country, will be a great deal in the stable, I wish the said stable to be under my own eye. Excuse my plaguing you with these trifles. I have a great notion you can assist me if you will think about it. Adieu. Believe me, ever dear sir, Your truly obliged and faithful,

[*Notes and Queries*, 5th Ser. xi. 65] WALTER SCOTT

TO REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO

EDINBURGH, *July 3*, 1811

MY DEAR SIR,—I should be very ungrateful indeed, if in distributing the few copies I have retained of the inclosed drum and trumpet thing, I should forget to request your kind acceptance of it, especially as I am sure you will applaud the purpose, and pardon imperfections in the execution. I am so busy making up all my little parcels, that I have only a moment to add that I hope this will find you as well as I wish you. Believe me, dear Sir, your truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

[*Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1832]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 5th July 1811

MANY thanks my dearest friend for your kind remembrance, from Dumfries¹ which I postponed answering from day to day because I expected continually to have had *Don Roderick* before the public. I sent a small private copy of which I printed a few to give away among particular friends, to Mr. Arbuthnot on Sunday last for your kind acceptance. By to-morrow's post I shall send him one of the large-paper copies which is better fitted for your weak eyes—I hope sincerely they are getting better and I beg you will not exert them too much but get some one to read to you. When very young and a hard student I injured my eyes greatly by reading very late and writing still later but I found great advantage from the constant practice then recommended to me of washing the throat and particularly the back of the neck repeatedly in the course of the day with the coldest spring water I could get ; and my eyes are now tolerably recovered though I am very cautious of straining them. I also used with advantage an Eye Lotion of which I had the receipt from Lord Webb Seymour. I enclose the receipt but as disorders of that organ differ so much I beg you will not use it, without the advice of some medical person & if anyone of that description says it will not hurt your Ladyships complaint I will venture to hope it may do it good. If you bath the back of the neck with springwater putting a tea-spoonful of nitre into it will render the cold still more intense.

¹ Lady Abercorn's letter, of 1st June, was actually written from Port Patrick, but, after speaking of Lord Melville's death, she expresses her disappointment at not finding the Scotts at Dumfries : " We are never again to meet I verily believe, tell Mrs Scott her kindness does but tantalize me for I have had such weak eyes these six weeks past I have not been able to read one word, and I dare not begin the Manuscript . . . I long to visit you and to see you with your family all about you, but Heaven knows whether I shall ever see so bright a day. A thousand thanks for the Castle of Otranto, you are too good to me, but you could not bestow your friendship upon one who more highly admires and values you."

We have indeed in poor Lord Mellville lost a generous-spirited patriot, a man of the most extensive political information and one of the kindest friends in private life that ever adorned society. Lady Mellville is still at Dunira in the Highlands bearing her incalculable loss as people must bear irremediable afflictions. The fatal disease was an ossification of the veins and fibres of the heart which had commenced so far back as 1802 attended with violent palpitation and fainting fits. He was quite sensible for several years of the nature of his complaint that it was gradually producing an interruption to the circulation in the very seat of life and must be mortal sooner or later. He has left a very remarkable letter to a medical friend dated six or seven years back in which he expresses this opinion of his disorder and promises to be attentive to regimen at table. But as to riding fast and speaking vehemently in public from which the physician had also dissuaded [him] he says that he must be left to the dictates of his own feelings both in [the] exercise and in the discharge of his public duty and that he must ride fast or slow as the feeling of the moment prompted and that he could not think of speaking in public as if his physician was one of his audience. It is very remarkable that for about two years before his death all the painful symptoms of his disorder seemed to disappear and he never in his life as he himself told me enjoyed better health. Yet upon opening the body it appeared that the large ventricle which discharges the blood through the system was contracted to nearly one third of the natural size by the progress of the ossification. He was quite well the day preceding his death he had arrived by a hasty journey from the Highlands to be present at Lord President Blair's funeral with whom he was connected by early uninterrupted and intimate friendship. During the two days he was in Edinburgh he was chiefly occupied in assisting to arrange the family affairs of the Presidt. whose family is but

indifferently provided for. Lord Mellville wrote a most affecting letter to Mr. Perceval recommending Mrs. Blair to the protection and generosity of the public to whom her husband has rendered such eminent services. In the evening he made his visit to the disconsolate family whose house is next door to Lord Chief Baron's then his residence. Upon his return he supp'd with the C. Baron who did not remark any thing particular in his appearance. As he undressed to go to bed he directed his mournings to be prepared for next day when the funeral of the President was to take place, and at the same time said "I lie down satisfied for I have done all the painful duty which friendship exacted from me," or some expression to that effect. In the morning he did not ring at his usual hour of seven for he always rose early and his servant becoming alarmed entered his room about eight and found him dead and all remains of vital heat quite departed. It was clear that he had never waked but past away in sleep to a better world where there is neither calumny persecution nor sorrow. One arm was laid over his breast and the other stretched by his side, the attitude in which he usually slept. It is a remarkable coincidence that he died on Mr. Pitt's birthday, supposing that he departed before the morning ; to which must be added the singular circumstance that [the] early friend of his youth whose funeral he came prepared to attend on the next day was then lying dead within a few rooms of him. Whether the quick and animated feeling of grief did or did not hasten this strange catastrophe can only be known to God Almighty but many of our medical men do think that the event though perhaps it could not have been long deferred was precipitated by the painful emotions with which the President's death and the sad employments which devolved upon Lord Mellville in consequence were necessarily attended.

I met him very often during his stay in Edinburgh

last spring being usually asked to meet him while he was on the round of visiting his old friends. I think my wife and I dined in company with him and Lady M. at different houses, six or seven days together besides their honouring us twice with their company in Castle Street. He was in high health and spirits and very communicative of curious information and anecdotes respecting Pitt's administration. I took the liberty to ask him why he did not write down some of these particulars for use of future historians. He promised that if I came to Dunira I should see some documents which he had preserved with such a view but had never found leisure to arrange them.

No doubt an immense deal of valuable and curious materials for history would have [been] [*very scratched and blotted*] preserved had our dear friend pursued his resolution. He showed me in confidence a very curious state of the correspondence which he had with the present ministers upon the last change in which by the way he was but indifferently used. His loss will be severely felt by the Pitt interest in Scotland for his long possession of power and influence had enabled him to acquire claims upon the gratitude of many individuals which will expire along with him. His domestic affairs will turn out better (or at least somewhat better) than his friends expected but Lady Mellville will be but indifferently provided for. Lord Mellville by assistance of Mr. Dundas Saunders [?] made some good purchases about Dunira which may be now worth about £4000 a year. It is said [that the] [*a hole in MS.*] Regent has expressed a wish that something should be done for Lady M. He caused his secretary write to the Presidts. son in law expression of his R.H.'s desire that a provision suitable to the services Ld. Prest. had rendered the country should be made for that family. This looks like laying himself out for popularity. I avoided meeting the present Ld. Mellville when down here lest it should have the indelicate appearance of dunning him about my own matters in the midst of his

family distress. Lord Dalkeith attacked him on the subject however & he expressed himself as if it was to be done immediately on his return to town. But I have heard nothing on the subject since about a month since when [he] told me that it was put into the Treasury & Mr. Arbuthnot was to see it through the forms. But he had not explained this *quite* so distinctly to Mr. A. as to me. I took the opportunity to write to both last Sunday & I hope I shall learn where or how the matter hitches ; for somewhere I think there is an obstacle. My next letter will be on a pleasanter subject for I want to tell you my dearest friend that I have bought a small farm about £150 a year prettily situated upon the banks of the Tweed so now I am a *Laird* at your Ladyships service and I want your advice about planting and building a cottage and fifty things besides.—Ever, my dear friend your truly grateful and obliged

WALTER SCOTT

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 25th July 1811

As you say my letters amuse you my dearest friend I lose no time in offering my mite to divert you during your indisposition which I sincerely hope is now giving way to good weather & quiet. The rheumatism is a terrible complaint & scarcely yields to anything except the old vulgar remedy of flannel, the easterly winds too must have added greatly to its intensity—they seem to be everlasting in this quarter. I am now busy in the country ; even the attractions of Jo: Kemble I am afraid will hardly drag me to town although I wish I had been in the way to offer him some civility both on account of his own merit & as a friend of the Priory. As for showing him my play¹ I have not a legible copy of it till I get my own scribbled manuscript copied over. Besides I do not

¹ *The House of Aspen*, which Lady Abercorn has been reading.

feel at all inclined to face the stage nor do I think the tragedy worthy the pains it would cost to make it tolerable. The only good scene in it is that between the mother & son & it occurs so early in the piece that all the interest of it would be over before the conclusion. The fifth Act has greatly too much mummery & too much blood—it would need to be entirely new-written & as the Coachman replied to Pope's usual exclamation "Heaven mend me," it would be more easy to make a new one.

My matters are in *Statu quo*. I think of putting Lord Dalkeith in mind of his promise to write to Lord M. in a way which will probably elicit an answer of one kind or other. All the Scotch appointments are left vacant which looks as if ministers had some difficulty in getting the Regents consent for filling them up. I fear the poor old king is now to be laid aside for ever when the Prince will probably make his own arrangements : if he consult his interest character & safety he will abide by those who adhered to his father in his distress. Ten thousand thanks for your kindness dear Lady Abercorn which I can never sufficiently acknowledge although I venture to assure you it is not lost upon me.

The action between those pure spirits Sir F. Burdett¹ & Mr. Scott (observe he is an Englishman & not of *our* clan) divested of technicalities stands thus. It appears there was an intrigue between *Westminsters Hope* & Lady Oxford the consequence whereof was a child. As this circumstance threatened exposure, the patriotic Bart. granted a bond of £20,000 to Mr. Scott as a provision for the Lady & her child. And thus matters stood till

¹ See the note on p. 512. Sir Francis Burdett, the Radical leader who won the first triumph for parliamentary reform by his election for Westminster in 1807, was at the time Scott wrote out of Parliament, and had just emerged from prison. He was re-elected for Westminster in 1812. Of Sir Francis, Lockhart was able to add a note to a letter of 1809 : "Sir Francis Burdett has lived to show how unjustly the Tories of 1809 read his political character." His aristocratic temper did not like Radicals at close quarters any more than Byron did.

the alarm blew over. When it appeared there was only the little innocent consequence to be provided for, it was settled that the bond for £20,000 should be cancelled on payment of £5000,, as a provision for the infant—but as a counterpart of this arrangement Mr. Scott was to grant his bond for £5000 to Sir Francis to be lodged in the hands of a mutual confident untill the child came of age. If it died before that period then the bond was to be delivered to Sir F. in order to [*indecipherable*] his recovering the £5000,, which in that event M. S. would have no title to retain. But it seems this mutual friend betrayed his trust & put the bond into Sir Francis's hands who has commenced a suit upon it in our courts. Mr. Scott's defence is that he received indeed the £5000 but that it was as a provision for the natural child & though he granted a bond for it yet that bond was only to be enforced in case of the child's death when Sir Francis would be entitled to have back his money. Thus stands this scandalous affair in which neither the Knight the Squire nor the Lady are like to acquire much credit. No decision is yet given—When the papers are printed I will procure you a copy.

As the shortest reply to your kind inquiries about the size and nature of my cottage I send you a sketch of the plan marked with the accommodations which may be necessary. There is nothing romantic in the situation but the neighbourhood of a very noble and bold stream of water. The place I now inhabit is much more beautiful but then it is not my own. I intend to plant almost the whole property excepting about twenty-four acres above the road for arable purposes and the meadow near the proposed cottage for pasture. Thus in time I shall be embosom'd in a little wood tho' at present the place is very bare. I am torturing my brains for the best means of conquering the prim regularity of artificial plantations which I think may be done by putting in plants of different ages and even sowing some part of the

ground. Wood rises very fast with us everywhere. I shall have time enough for my plans for I do not obtain possession till next May. A larger farm bounds my little patch to the South which is now to be sold and I would not hesitate to purchase it were my matters finished above stairs, but otherwise the difference between the interest of money and rent of land is too great for me to think of it. I have not heard of Lady Mellvilles plans but I think it likely she will remain among her relations in this country for some little time. I should rather be surprized at the event your Ladyship hints at : yet it is not impossible for Lord M. & she were not at all times entirely cordial—this is of course *entre nous*. Miss Wortley I believe more than once made up differences between them.

We have been christening Lady Dalkeith's little girl (would it had been a boy). She is called *Margaret* after the Lady in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and Charlotte and I had the honour to be sponsors (as representing our betters, *cela s'entend*). My name sake Walter is really a noble child. I have not seen Lady D. looking so well this many a day.

Adieu my dearest friend. I must hear your page say his lesson and it is hard to say whether the preceptor or the scholar finds the task more wearisome. But I do not chuse he should lose ground during his holydays.—Ever your faithful and obliged,

W. SCOTT

Your letter of the 16th reached me on the 25 which seems a very long time for so short a distance.

[*Pierpont Morgan*]

TO MR. MAYO

DEAR SIR,—I am much honoured by your thinking any part of my poetry worthy of the particular enquiry contained in your favour of the 26th July. The same doubt has been proposed to me from other friends and to say the truth I have not been able to give a *scholium*

upon the passage at all satisfactory either to myself or the querists. I think I meant merely to allude to the poisonous qualities of the nightshade and that I had in my head the Grecian practice of dispatching criminals by vegetable poison forgetting that hemlock not nightshade was the ingredient they used. So much for *punishment*—As for the idea of pride connected with the Foxglove, I believe I can only plead its erect stature and the gaudy flaunting appearance of its flowers.¹ I heartily wish I had a wiser answer to send to so flattering an enquiry but I give the above under reservation of my right to avail myself of the ingenuity of any friendly commentator who may find out a better meaning for the author than he can for himself. I remain, Dear Sir, Your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRKSHIRE, 3 August (c. 1811)

Mr. Mayo, Bishop Lawton,² Near Barnstaple, Devon.
[*Brotherton*]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

HERE have I been my dear Miss Baillie basking among gooseberries and currants like an ungrateful pig for these three weeks past without thinking of acknowledging your kind and comfortable letter. It does me good to hear that you are well and that you are working ; but I am determined *not* to believe the unpleasant part of the intelligence you give me namely that you intend to defer the publication of your future plays untill a period when (should I be then in the way to peruse them) the pleasure they must afford will be to me most painfully chequerd. So I will only thank you for your promised Xmas treat³

¹ See letter to Berguer, 20th October 1812, vol. iii. pp. 180-1.

² Should be "Tawton."

³ "When you are sitting by your Christmas fire you shall have my next volume, almost entirely occupied with the passion of Fear . . . a good winter fire-side subject if it be well managed."—Joanna Baillie to Scott, 9th July 1811. She proposes to publish no more plays, but to write and reserve them for posterity.

without admitting your threatend declaration that it is to be your *foy*. We would willingly try another play on our little stage if you would give us an opportunity and I really think, small as it is, you will be as worthily associated with the pieces they have tried to bring out as with the *horse-play* which seems to be the fashion of Covent Garden outdoing even Johnsons prophecy that upon these boards "Hunt might box, or Mahomet might dance." We have one very intelligent accomplis'd young man in our theatre Terry by name who promises to make a great figure and is indeed by far the least pedantic and most agreeable of his profession whom I ever met with. A great admirer of yours, that is included in my ideas of dramatic excellence of course. He excells in expressing the harsher and darker shades of passion and I will certainly make him study the tragedy of fear (with a view to getting it up) so soon as it comes out of the press unless you rather chuse to trust us with an unpublish'd one. By the way I must not forget to say that I saw Mr. Henderson in town some time ago and that he settled his matters with Mr. Ballantyne to their mutual satisfaction. I advised him before accepting Mr. B's offer, which he was inclined to close with at once, to write to Longmans house as they might chuse to give a larger premium in order to keep all your copyrights together. But upon enquiry I understand he found Mr. B's offer most advantageous. The Family Legend will always be a stock play in Edinburgh. It was acted several times last winter and always brought good houses. I shall most anxiously expect your volume so pray dont forget to invoke Mr. Frelings talisman to waft it to me. I can hardly (in my impatience) admit your rational apology for delaying the publication till a congenial period and were it possible for me to hasten the treat I expect, by such a composition with you, I would promise to read the volume at the silence of noonday upon the top of Minchmuir or Windlestraw. Law

—the hour is allowd by those skillful in daemonology to be as full of witchery as midnight itself and I assure you I have felt really oppressd with a sort of fearful sense of loneliness when looking around the naked and towering ridges of desolate barrenness which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain—the patches of cultivation being all hidden in the little glens and vallies or only appearing to make one sensible how feeble and ineffectual the efforts of art have been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown author of a fine but unequal poem calld *Caledonia*¹ places the remarkable superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a chace with the baying of the dogs the throttling sobs of the deer the hollo' of a numerous train of huntsmen and the "hoofs thick beating on the hollow hill." I have often repeated his verses with some sensation of awe in such a place and I am sure yours would effect their purpose as compleatly. Nay I would bet on their effect even during the brilliancy of the Princes fete so little does the charm of your poetry depend upon mood and time. But all these considerations will not accelerate the flight of the printers devil so I must e'en have patience.

Don Roderic has greatly exceeded my calculation as to popularity. It is now to be squeezed into the Edinburgh Annual Register which contains by the way a tolerable account of our actors and theatricals though most imperfect and erroneous as far as the Family Legend is commented upon. There is an article by a Mocking Bird (not in caricature but in serious sadness) who gives a good imitation of Crabbe, an indifferent one of Moor and one of me which begins very well indeed

¹ So Scott writes but Lockhart corrects to *Albania*, a poem of that name by an anonymous writer of the early eighteenth century which had been reprinted, from the sole existing copy in the possession of Professor Glennie of Aberdeen, by Leyden in his *Scottish Descriptive Poems: with some illustrations of Scottish Literary Antiquities*, which contains also Wilson's *Clyde* and Alexander Hume's *Day Estival*. This is in the Abbotsford Library, where the only *Caledonia* is Chalmers' work.

but falls off (as I think) grievously.¹ Ballantyne says if the article is approved he expects for next year a scene in imitation of Miss Baillie and also a ditty in the manner of Southey. The author lies conceald as yet—Among the striplings whose ill fate leads them to court the muses I have lately found a young man whose genius appears to me very uncommon considering he is but sixteen.² He was with me a few days ago and brought me a little goblin tale founded on a fact which has many of the faults attachd to that slovenly composition, the German ballad, but I think has also merits more than sufficient to redeem them. You know I am none of those crimps for the Muses who enlist boys under age nor am I by any means apt to give encouragement to versifiers in general. I made use of the youths application to me to direct his study towards what appears to me the most useful and improving branches of learning assuring him he could not be a poet without a general acquaintance with letters. It may turn out that he shall be no poet after all his peasant promise and the labour I have imposed on him. But in that case he will realize the fable of the dying peasant who told his three idle sons of a treasure conceald in his

¹ The Bird was Scott himself. The pieces in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* include *The Poacher* (on seeing which Crabbe exclaimed: "This man, whoever he is, can do all that I can and something more"), a fragment in imitation of Moore's lyrics, and a fragment after Scott's own manner which later was taken up into the more elaborate mystification of *The Bridal of Triermain*. In a letter to James Ballantyne accompanying them, Scott says: "Understand I have no idea of parody, but of serious anticipation if I can accomplish it. The subject of Crabbe is 'The Poacher' a character in his line but which he has never touched." "I think the imitations will consist of Crabbe, Southey, W. Scott, Wordsworth, Moore, and perhaps a ghost story for Lewis. I should be ambitious of trying Campbell; but his peculiarity consists so much in the matter, and so little in the manner that (to his huge praise be it said) I rather think I cannot touch him." The imitations were preceded by a prose extravaganza *The Inferno of Altesidora* in Cervantes' style, but also recalling *The Battle of the Books*, in which Scott describes criticism as a game of tennis, some striking the book towards the public favour and others intent on striking it back, in which he is hinting at the critical character and rivalry of Jeffrey and Gifford. See vol. i. Appendix, p. 416.

² W. Howison, known as M. de Peu de Mots. See Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, ii. 50.

field. They trenched the ground in quest of it and found no treasure indeed but a most excellent crop which rewarded their labours and explained their fathers meaning. The young man is gentle amiable and unassuming. During his stay here he told me with great simplicity how much surprized he was to hear Harry Mackenzie and I talk together like sportsmen and horse jockies at some public place. I suppose he thought we should have spoke in iambics—I tried to case-harden him a little by carrying him a walking and riding but desisted for fear of accidents after one or two sprains. I send his ballad which he has promised greatly to improve but I think it will divert you as it is. This brings me to our amiable friend Mr. Coxe whose manners and mildness of disposition I do *entre nous* like much better than his poetry. He has beat me in the matter of the brooch for I had imagined a dozen pretty things about naiads and mermaids and St. Columbus and the North and the South and Hampstead and the Hebrides—but some how or other nothing came of it. My dreams about my cottage go on. Of about 110 acres I have manfully resolved to plant from 60 to 70—As to my scale of dwelling why you shall see my plan when I have adjusted it. My present intention is to have only two spare-bedrooms, with dressingrooms each of which will on pinch have a couch bed. But I cannot relinquish my border principle of accommodating all the cousins and *dunawastles* who will rather sleep on chairs and on the floor and in the hayloft than be absent when folks are gathered together—and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Peri Banou in the Arabian nights that suited alike all numbers of company equally well—ten people fill it at any time and I remember its lodging thirtytwo without any complaints. As for the *go-about* folks, they generally pay their score one way or other, for you who are always in the way of seeing and commanding and selecting your society are too fastidious to understand how a dearth of news may

make any body wellcome that can tell you the current report of the day. If it is any pleasure to these stragglers to say I made them welcome as strangers I am sure that costs me nothing—only I deprecate publication and am now the less afraid of it that I think scarce any Bookseller will be desperate enough to print a new Scottish tour. Besides one has the pleasure to tell over all the stories that have bored your friends a dozen of times with some degree of propriety to a stranger. In short I think like a true Scotchman that a stranger unless he is very unpleasant indeed usually brings a title to a wellcome along with him and to confess the truth I do a little envy my old friend Abou Hassan his walks on the bridge of Bagdad and evening conversations and suppers with the guests whom he was never to see again in his life. He never fell into a scrape till he met the Caliph and thank God no Caliphs frequent the Brigg of Melrose which will be my nearest Rialto at Abbotsford. I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled all efforts to engage him in conversation excepting one whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage-coach. My friend who piqued himself on his talents for conversation assailed this tortoise on all hands but in vain and at length descended to expostulation “I have talkd to you my friend on all the ordinary subjects literature farming merchandise gaming and game-laws horse-races and suits at law, politics and swindling and blasphemy and philosophy—is there any one subject you will favour me by opening upon?” The wight writhed his countenance into a grin “Sir” said he “can ye say onything clever about *bend leather*?” There I own I should have been as much non-plussed as my acquaintance but upon any less abstruse topic I think in general something may be made of a stranger worthy of his clean sheets and beef-steak and glass of port. You indeed my dear friend may suffer a little for me as I should for you when such a fortuitous acquaintance talks of the intercourse arising

from our meeting as anything beyond the effect of chance and civility. But these braggings break no bones and are always a compliment to the person of whom the discourse is held though the narrator means it to himself; for no one can suppose the affectation of intimacy can be assumed unless from an idea that it exalts the person who brags of it.

My little folks are well and I am performing the painful duty of hearing my little boy his latin lesson every morning; painful because my knowledge of the language is more familiar than grammatical and because little Walter has a disconsolate yawn at intervals that is quite irresistible and has nearly cost me a dislocation of my jaws. Charlotte is very well and joins me in the most kind remembrances to Miss Agnes Baillie and Mrs. Baillie. I fear (yet why should I say so in the circumstances) that the fatal termination of the poor old monarchs illness will soon (if it has not already) restore Dr. Baillie to his family. I would I could augur well of what is to follow—but alas! a public defiance of morality is but a bad bottoming for a new reign—it is incalculable the weight which George III derived from his domestic conduct. But we must hope the best and none is more willingly to hope it than I who would do my little best for the crown of England if it hung upon a hedge-stake.

When I shall come to rummage your portfolio and eat your pudding at Hampstead is very uncertain: if I should walk in the morning after you receive my letter, pray do not take me for a *wraith*. But it is much more likely I shall not see London for several years as I did not come up this summer when I had real and serious business to do. My most agreeable errand will be to claim the promised communication of your future plans. Adieu
God bless you.

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 4 August [1811¹]

[*Abbotsford Copies and Royal College of Surgeons, London*]

¹ This year-date is added on the back of the letter in Joanna Baillie's hand.

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

[8th August, 1811]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—A report has reachd me that the lands of Mr. Mercer adjoining to my new purchase are to be roupd at Melrose on Saturday. If this be true pray procure me a note of the articles of roup as the place lies very convenient for me. It will add much to the favour if you can dine with me tomorrow yourself when you will meet Lord Dalkeith & Ld Somerville. I would take your coming up very kind as I really think seriously of the land & would wish to consult with you about it. If which is very possible you are engaged for some other person you can nevertheless send me notice about the articles of roup that I may consider what I am to do yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL *Thursday evening*

[*Curle*]

TO JAMES MONTGOMERY ¹

ASHESTIEL, *Aug. 8, 1811*

SIR,—I am favoured with a copy of your paper in which you have been so good as to insert an extract from a late poetical attempt of mine with a very flattering introduction. I the more readily embrace the opportunity of returning thanks for your public attention that I have been long desirous of an opportunity of expressing the pleasure I have received from your poetry and the interest I have taken in it. I assure you, Sir, that having come late as a candidate into the literary world, and being somewhat philosophical respecting the

¹ James Montgomery's paper was the *Eclectic Review*. His own poetry was very mediocre, but the poem on the abolition of the slave-trade, *The West Indies*, published in 1810, had achieved great popularity and was doubtless in Scott's mind.

popular applause, I am doubly sensible of the value of the approbation of a man of talents, and that I am respectfully, Your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

Mr. Montgomery, Sheffield.

[*Life of James Montgomery*]

To JOHN RICHARDSON

MY DEAR RICHARDSON,—I yesterday saw the *announce* of your change of state¹ in the papers which gave me sincere joy. I beg you will accept my best congratulations on the subject with my hope that you will find the marriage state what I am sure it will be to a man of your sense & temper an alleviation of the necessary pains of life and more than a duplication of its pleasures. Mrs. Scott begs me to say that she claims an opportunity of being made acquainted with Mrs. Richardson whenever your residence in Scotland will permit or our happening to visit London of which last incident there is no speedy chance. If you can visit Ashestiel before you leave Scotland you know how happy you will make us & I will shew you a bare haugh & a bleak bank by the side of the Tweed on which I design to break a lance with Mother Nature & make a paradise in spite of her. I have the Tweed for my henchman for about a mile. I should not otherwise speak so *crouselly*. If you can prevail on your bonny bride therefore to “busk her & come to the braes of Yarrow” you shall see peradventure what you shall behold—

I am greatly obliged to you for your attention to my hobby horse & the very curious volume you have sent me as forage for it, pray keep a good look out for me & encourage me to request such a favour by letting me know at your leisure the amount of my present debt.

With best wishes & respects to Mrs. Richardson in

¹He married Miss Elizabeth Hill, a friend of Campbell the poet.

which Mrs. Scott begs leave to join I am always dear
Richardson most truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 14 August 1811

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO MRS. SCOTT, 33 GEORGE STREET EDINR.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I found your letter on our arrival from Mertoun where we had been for two or three days. I had a few lines from Jack from London without any direction how to write to him but I shall address to him *Cheltenham* (not Chatham as you mistake it) and as the post office people always are alert at these watering places I am sure that will find him.

Two days ago I bid as far as £6000,, for a farm which lay near my little retreat but at length gave it up as far beyond the value especially as another much more to my purpose will be in the market in a year or two.

I might perhaps have felt bolder on this subject had I entertained further hope of having my salary made up but the unfavourable estate of the Kings health makes so happy a circumstance very unlikely. I am advised to keep myself ready to go to London at a moments warning and have done so for this month past. But I own I have little expectation from personal solicitation and shall avoid the expence of a London journey if possible. Lord and Lady Dalkeith have been staying with us for two days—you would be delighted with them especially with the Lady.

I grieve to observe the death of poor Mr M. Montgomery and can easily conceive the distress so unexpected a misfortune in the family of a kind neighbour must have given you. He was a very good and respected young man.

I have a letter from Tom to the same purpose as yours. Had he consented to an Indian appointment when he

went to the Isle I could easily have got it him. I hope however times will come about yet & that I may be able to do something for my freinds. Thank God I have kept myself independant of all political changes so far as comfort & a respectable income is concernd.

I had a letter from Mr. Donaldson about Fergusons clerk upon whom as far as dilatoryness is concernd his masters mantle has assuredly descended. I have answerd Mr D. begging he might be brot. to a speedy reckoning.

The bairns are all well. I labour Walter daily in Cæsar and Virgil and on Sundays in Buchanans psalms—a great exertion for my impatient temper—however between yawning and scratching our head we get on pretty well. Charlotte sends her kind love—in my present unsettled state (which pray do not mention to a human being) I cannot ask you to come here but if it has a termination before our good weather has quite fled I will send the carriage to meet you at Bankhouse and you may bring Crookshanks or Jessy with you to take care of you like a lady as you are. Believe me Dear Mother your dutiful and affectionate Son

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 14 August [1811]

[Law]

For DOCTOR LEYDEN, CALCUTTA ¹

Favoured by the Hon. Lady Hood.

MY DEAR LEYDEN,—You hardly deserve I should write to you for I have written you two long letters since I saw Mr. Purves and receivd from [him] your valued dagger,

¹ This letter is endorsed by Scott : “ Letter to poor Leyden returnd by Lady Hood he having died before she reachd India.” Lockhart has printed it with the usual errors, omissions and corrections, most of which latter an intelligent reader can make for himself. The most obvious is “ listening rather to the dictates of revenge and generosity ” for “ listening rather to the dictates of revenge than generosity.”

which I preserve carefully till Bonaparte shall come or send for it. I might take a cruel revenge on you for your silence by declining Lady Hood's¹ request to make you acquainted with her—in which case I assure you great would be your loss. She is quite a congenial spirit an ardent Scotswoman and devotedly attachd to those sketches of traditionary history which all the waters of the Burrampooter cannot I suspect altogether wash out of your honour's memory. This however is the least of her praises. She is generous and feeling and intelligent and has contrived to keep her heart and social affections vivid and awake amidst[t] the chilling and benumbing atmosphere of London fashion. I ought perhaps first to have told you that Lady Hood was the honble Mary Mackenzie daughter of Lord Seaforth² and wife of Sir Samuel Hood one of our most distinguishd naval heroes who goes out to take the command in your seas. Lastly she is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Scott's and myself and first gaine[d] my heart by her admiration of the Scenes of Infancy. So you see my good friend what your laziness would have cost you if listening rather to the dictates of revenge and generosity I had withheld my pen from the inkhorn. But to confess the truth I fear two such similar minds would have found each other out like good dancers at a ball room, without the assistance of a Master of ceremonies. So I may even as well play Sir Clement Cotterel³ with a good grace since I cannot further my vengeance by withholding my good offices. My last letter went by favour of John Pringle who carried you a copy of the Lady of the Lake a poem which I really think you will like better than Marmion on the whole though not perhaps in particular passages. Pray let me

¹ Lady Hood, the wife of Sir Samuel Hood (1762-1814), who had just been appointed Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies, where he arrived in the early summer of 1812.

² For Lord Seaforth, Caberfae, see later. Vol. iv. p. 13 and note.

³ Master of the Ceremonies, 1710-58; Vice-President, Society of Antiquaries. See *D.N.B.*

know if it carried you back to the land of mist and mountain?

Lady Hoods departure being sudden and your deserts not extraordinary (speaking as a correspondt.) I have not time to write you much news. The best domestic intelligence is that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire his lease of Ashestiel being out has purchased about 100 acres extending along the banks of the Tweed just above the confluence of the Gala and about three miles from Melrose. There saith fame he designs to bigg himself a minstrel bower sibi et amicis and happy will he [be] when India shall restore you to a social meal at his cottage. The place looks at present very like "poor Scotland's gear"; it consists of a bank and a haugh as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment but I fear, ere you come to see, the verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness will in some degree have removed this reproach. But it has a wild solitary air and commands a splendid reach of the Tweed for about a mile and, to sum all up in the words of Touchstone, "it is a poor thing, but mine own."

Our little folks whom you left infants are now shooting fast forward to youth and shew some blood as far as aptitude to learning is concern'd. Charlotte and I are wearing on as easily as this fasheous world will permit; the outside of my head is waxing grizzled but I cannot find that the snow has coold my brain or my heart. Adieu dear Leyden pray brighten the chain of friendship by a letter when occasion serves and believe me ever
Yours most affectionately

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 25 Augt 1811

[*Walpole Collection*]

TO CHARLES CARPENTER

ASHESTIEL 25 Augt. 1811

MY DEAR CARPENTER,—I take the opportunity of Sir Samuel Hoods going out to command in your Indian seas

to enquire after your welfare & that of Mrs. Carpenter & at the same time to make you known should circumstances permit to the very accomplish'd & pleasing woman who takes charge of this letter. Lady Hood is by birth a daughter of Lord Seaforth one of our greatest Highland Chiefs & a keen¹ Scotchwoman. So I hope Mrs. Carpenter & she will be agreeable to each other as country women ; although I fear there is small chance of your being at Madras in case the Admirals vessel touches there. If it should fortunately happen otherwise you will I am sure be glad to see a valued friend of Charlotte & me & Lady Hood will I know be happy in making your acquaintance. She has always lived in the first circles of society in London but deserves regard still more from her valuable personal qualities than from her rank & manners. Sir Samuel Hood is an amiable unaffected man & as much distinguish'd by his gentle & unassuming manners in society as by his professional gallantry of which he has given so many proofs. I have very little domestic news to send you : our little people are shooting fast up from childhood towards youth & shew promising disposition both for morals & learning : your namesake & godson little Charles seems to be the cleverest of the party & indeed exceeds any child at his age I have ever seen. As my lease of this place is out, I have bought, for about £4000, a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half-a-mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity of the river ; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot ; and it is at present my great amusement to plan the various lines which may be necessary for that purpose. The farm comprehends about a hundred acres, of which I shall keep fifty in pasture and tillage, and plant

¹ Supplied from the Fraser Memoirs.

all the rest, which will be a very valuable little possession in a few years, as wood bears a high price among us. I intend building a small cottage here for my summer abode, being obliged by law, as well as induced by inclination, to make this county my residence for some months every year.¹ This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as *laird* and *lady* of *Abbotsford*. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very *clannish* in this corner, all the Scotts in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whisky punch. Now as this happy festival is to be deferred for more than a twelve-month, during which our cottage is to be built, &c. &c., what is there to hinder brother and sister Carpenter from giving us their company upon so gratifying an occasion? Pray, do not stay broiling yourself in India for a moment longer than you have secured comfort and competence. Don't look forward to *peace*; it will never come either in your day or mine.

Nor do public matters at home look very consoling: the poor old King is so very ill that death will be a deliverance which may soon be expected. All parties look up to & claim an interest with the Prince whose plan seems to be to rely upon none of them, but breaking them up by a partial distribution of his favor to form an administration dependant only on the Sovereign & not upon any public man or party leader: this is all very well should such an administration prove successful & popular, but if otherwise the public resentment which in other cases is confined to the ministers may in that supposition take a higher object. God turn all to the best but at present our prospects are very unsettled. Adieu my dear Carpenter: your sister sends kindest love

¹ But Abbotsford is in Roxburghshire, *not* Selkirkshire, of which Scott was Sheriff.

to Mrs. C. & you : I daily scold her for her silence & she promises to write as I naturally judge she will know better what can interest you than I : but to say truth though your sister & my wife she is the worst pen woman I ever saw. Your affectionate brother

WALTER SCOTT

[*Abbotsford Copies and Fraser Memoirs.*]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR,—Yours of the 16th owing partly to delay & partly to my absence from Ashestiel reached me only this day and as your tour may be prolonged still leaves me hope that you will find this at Edinburgh. If so the purpose is to beseech that “being so far into the bowels of the Land” you will allow me the pleasure of shewing you the banks of the Tweed and braes of Yarrow and of thanking you personally for the many favours you have honoured me with. This little cottage is just 30 miles from Edinburgh and seven miles short of Selkirk ; if you care for that sort of conveyance the mail will set you down within a mile of my dwelling at a small hamlet called Clovenford. You have but to name the day and I will have a servant waiting for you with a chaise : ¹ if you cannot do that let the ostler shoulder your portmanteau and shew you the way to Ashestiel shout lustily for the boat over the Tweed and you will be with us in an instant. I will never forgive you unless you make this digression in my favour and make your stay withal as long as you possibly can. I will shew you all that is memorable in our wilds and set you safely upon your journey in any direction your mind gives you to. If you make any stay in Edinburgh and really cannot conveniently come here why then Mahomet must come to the Mountain. I would have shewn you the way here at any rate but am detained by the necessity of concluding

¹ I have inserted a colon.

some arrangements this week respecting the purchase of a small farm, which will detain me here (but not occupy my leisure) till after Thursday when I will wait upon you in Edinburgh should it not be convenient for you to come here. Pray write when this comes to hand. Our Selkirk post leaves Edinr at 2 in the afternoon, & I get the letter at 8 next morning. Yours truly in hopes of a speedy meeting

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 25th Aug. [1811]

On Thursday I must dine with the seller of my land but can easily make you welcome there where you will see the humours of some of our Yeomanry. Should you want a Cicerone in Edinburgh, Will you call on my friend John Ballantyne who will be proud to give you his assistance in every way if you exhibit this postscript.

[*Abbotsford Copies*]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Hartstongue, who takes the trouble of this letter, has been indefatigable in his researches for the enlargement & improvement of the edition of Swift. He tells me that Mr. Mercier,¹ bookseller, Dublin, sent to your shop for my use in that edition “A Proposal for A Hospital for Incurables.” I hope it reached you safely and that you can find it for me, as it is a scarce and valuable tract. I remain etc.

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 4th September [1811]

[*Rosebery*]

¹ A note in the Abbotsford copies runs: “As far as Mr. Hartstonge can recollect it was in the summer of 1808 that Mr. Mercier in person left the tract Mr. Scott alludes to in his note.” Two letters from Robert Mercier, bookseller, of 27th August and 14th September 1808, to Messrs. Archibald Constable & Co., deal with books sent off, make offers of assistance, and give information regarding letters, etc. of Swift, all to aid “the great edition.” Neither mentions the “Incurables.”

TO ELIZABETH, MARCHIONESS OF STAFFORD

My best thanks, my dear lady marchioness, attend your kind grant of my boon. The acorns, with the arrival of which you flatter me, will come most safely by any Leith vessell to the care of Messrs. Ballantyne and Company, booksellers, Edinburgh. I make it a rule to get as much work out of these gentlemen as I possibly can. I hope my little grove will so flourish as to deserve being honoured by the name of the distinguished donor.

I had a letter (a melancholy one) some time ago from dear Lady Hood. She is a real loss to her friends, for we shall hardly find such another mixture of enthusiasm with gaiety and good humour and unaffected simplicity. But it is quite right she should go out with Sir Samuel, and I think she will be better amused with her stay in India than she seems at present to anticipate. If it is not quite the money-making place it once was, our eastern empire is considerably improved in point of society, and I hope Lady Hood will find many (at least among the gentlemen, for I don't anticipate highly of Indian ladies) whose conversation will interest and amuse her. And then there is the novelty of the scene, with the change of manners and the mixture of eastern magnificence with European elegance, and the dignity of the situation which our friend will not dislike. In short, when the long and dull passage is once over, I trust she will find herself well disposed to relish her new and in some degree dreaded situation.

As for Bandello, he is such an entertaining fellow, and shews such an odd picture of life during the feudal ages in Italy, that to quarrel with him for the coarsness and polissonerie of his time would be like shunning a wild and romantic walk for a few miry sloughs which may be stepd over as lightly as the passenger pleases. I beg your ladyship will not fail to read Webster's old play. If it were not treason to suppose that all that is rare and

curious is to be found on the shelves at Cleveland House I would refer you to a late collection of old plays in 3 volumes, double columns, printed by Miller, Albemarle Street,¹ in which it was inserted at my particular request. There is in it an odd and in some degree a terrific mixture of what is wild and extravagant with the simple, pathetic, and even childish turn of other places. I have not, I believe, a very good head for criticism, for it certainly is not *selon les règles* to be more affected by this sort of patch-work, than by regular scenes where every thing mean and trifling is compleately excluded, and the mind visited by nothing but what is meant to be in unison with tragic feeling. I do not know whether it is the spirit of contradiction, or whether the very pains taken to render every thing uniform, which never actually occurs in nature, but I feel terribly inclined to be hard hearted in the latter case, whereas I often light upon passages in these old neglected dramatists which, from the very strange and unexpected manner in which they are introduced, make the very blood tingle. I have the first edition of *Bandello*, now a very rare book in 3 volumes quarto and one 12mo. It has a great number of prefaces, and I believe some tales which were abridged in the later editions, excepting one printed at London about 1760, which is compleat. These prefaces often contain some thing relative to the tales, and when I go to Edinburgh I will look at that prefixd to the *Duchess of Amalphi*.

I beg your ladyship will have the goodness to make my most respectful compliments to the marquis, and am ever, your ladyship's honour'd and obliged humble servant,

ASHISTIEL, 11 September 1811.

WALTER SCOTT

[*The Sutherland Book*]

¹ See note on p. 113. What follows is Scott's criticism of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, based on the story of *Bandello*. See Stendhal's essay on the subject. *Bandello* (Matteo), *Novelle*. 3 tomi 4to and 1 tom. sm. 8vo. Lucca, 1554, e Lione, 1573, are in the Abbotsford Library.

To JOHN B. S. MORRITT

[September 1811]

MY DEAR MORRITT,—I don't delay long to thank you for your kind offer of acorns which I will accept with the greatest pleasure provided always the forwarding them does not cost you too much trouble. As they are in the South riding I should think a bushel might be sent from Hull to Leith as there is a good deal of intercourse between these ports. I assure you I will plant them in your name with my own hands and those of my little people and we will promise ourselves a *Morritt grove* when the fit time shall come round. Next year as I shall have properly speaking no place of residence in the country I hope to be a wanderer and to brighten the chain of friendship at Rokeby. I should like very much to go into Wales if I could get any good companion but I don't much approve of travelling alone—there are so many good things which rot in one's gizzard as Sancho pathetically complained during the interval when the Don imposed silence upon him!—

I am quite happy that there is to be an union between the houses of Lindsay and Pennington.¹ Lady Balcarras used to be my patroness many a day ago when like a great shy lubberly boy as I was I used to be very proud of the shelter of her countenance at parties and a seat in her box at the theatre where she was a constant attendant. Lady Anne Lindsay had great taste particularly for painting. She does not indeed place mountains on their apex like that of Taranta in Bruce's travels or those of Selkirkshire in Miss Lydia White's drawings but what her representations lose in the wonderful they gain in nature and beauty. It happend by accident that a brother of Lord Balcarras dined here when I received your letter and I made him happy by

¹ Morrirt's letter from Muncaster Castle of September 8th reports that "Our venerable host's last remaining child Miss Pennington is on the eve of being married to Lord Lindsey, Lord Balcarras's eldest son."—*Walpole Collection*.

telling him his nephew met the approbation of a friend of Lord Muncaster and of one who was likely (as much so as any one I know) to take a lively interest in an event which affected the happiness of a friends family.

The Edinburgh reviewers have been down on my poor Don Roderic hand to fist but truly as they are too fastidious to approve of the campaign I should be very unreasonable if I expected them to like the celebration thereof. I agree with you respecting the lumbering weight of the stanza and I shrewdly suspect it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the frequent recurrence of rhimes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza : even Spenser himself with all the licenses of using obsolete words and uncommon spelling sometimes fatigues the ear. They are also very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore.¹ But as I never exactly discovered in what these lay unless in conducting his advance and retreat upon a plan the most likely to verify the desponding speculations of the foresaid reviewers I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due.

The only literary news I have to send to you is that Lucien Bonapartes Epic in 24 Chants is about to appear. An application was made to me to translate it which I negatived of course and that roundly. I believe Tom Campbell will be next requested to do into English Charlemagne ou La Rome Delivree² for such is the title of this threatend publication.

¹ Lady Hood was among those who took strong exception to Scott's ungenerous omission of all reference to Sir John Moore's death at Corunna. The letter preserved in the Walpole collection is printed in part in *Familiar Letters*, i. pp. 229-31.

² "Napoleon, who was always resolute in considering the princes of his own blood as the first slaves in the state, had become of late very urgent with Lucien to dismiss his wife and unite himself with some of the royal families on the continent, or at least to agree to bestow the hand of his daughter upon young Ferdinand of Spain. But Lucien, determined at this time not to connect himself or his family with the career of his relative's

Charlotte sends best love to Mrs. Morritt and I am ever
Dear Morritt Yours most truly

WALTER SCOTT

[*Law*]

ambitions, resolved to settle in America, and place the Atlantic betwixt himself and the importunities of his Imperial brother. He applied to the British minister at Sardinia for a pass, who was under the necessity of referring him to his Government. On this second application he was invited to England, where he was permitted to live in freedom upon his parole, one officer only having a superintendence of his movements and correspondence. These were in every respect blameless ; and the ex-statesman who had played so distinguished a part in the great revolutionary game, was found able to amuse himself with the composition of an epic poem on the subject of Charlemagne ;—somewhat more harmlessly than did his brother Napoleon in endeavouring again to rebuild and consolidate the vast empire of the son of Pepin.”—SCOTT, *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, c. liv. The epic, in twenty-four books, appeared in 1814. It was translated, into English by the Rev. S. Butler and the Rev. F. Hodgson in 1815.

